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CHRISTIANITY FROM GOD.

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BY ALVAN TOBEY.

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PREFACE.

THE object of this little volume is to present some of the evidences of Christianity so plainly that any person of common intelligence, though without historical knowledge, can understand the argument and appreciate its force. I have aimed to use only reasoning which is of real and unquestionable strength, and to bring it within the power of the common people, the unlearned masses, to judge of its character. The book is not for the learned; but I hope there is nothing foolish or weak in it, and that those most competent to form a just judgment will find the reasoning worthy of consideration and acceptance.

Skeptical doubts sometimes trouble thoughtful persons, who have not read much, and have not much opportunity to read long and learned treatises, in proof that the Christian religion is what it claims to be. To such, perhaps, this book, easily read,

and I hope easily understood, may afford some help. It does not pretend to be a demonstration, such as belongs only to mathematical reasoning; but it offers such arguments as, to a thoughtful and candid mind, urge personal attention to the gospel. Perhaps only by a personal and experimental acquaintance with Christ and his salvation will the thoroughly searching inquirer be able to find, so as to *know beyond all doubt, that Christianity is from God.*

ALVAN TOBEY.

DURHAM, N.H., Nov. 6, 1867.

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CHRISTIANITY FROM GOD.

CHAPTER I.

MONUMENTAL PROOFS.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. v. 21.

I PROPOSE, in the present volume, to give a succinct view of the evidences of Christianity. My aim will be to show some of the proofs that the religion which we call Christian is true and is of God; and to make the argument so plain that any person of common understanding will see its force, and, if fair-minded, will be convinced. I am not so inexperienced as to think that I can persuade all to believe as I do on this great subject. But I do hope that all who read these pages will be satisfied of my honestly

trying to follow the direction of the apostle, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." And happy will it be, wise it must be, for us all to do this.

As a traveler approaches the city of Boston from any direction, he sees, among the multitude of tall spires and chimneys in view, a granite column, which attracts his notice as being higher and more substantial than any other object. If he be a stranger he may ask, pointing to it, "What is that?" The reply will be, "It is the Bunker Hill Monument." The stranger may ask, "Of what is it a monument?" and he will be told, "Of the battle of Bunker Hill, fought on the 17th of June, 1775; the first battle of the American Revolutionary war in which considerable numbers were engaged." Then might follow some statements, more or less at length, about the circumstances of the battle.

But when was this monument erected? It was begun fifty years from the day of the battle, by the laying of the corner-stone on the 17th of June, 1825. And its completion

was celebrated eighteen years after, on the 17th of June, 1843.

If, now, the traveler should visit the monument he would find that the very ground on which the battle was fought — the whole surface of the hill, indeed, except a small space around the shaft itself — has been removed for the accommodation of the city which has grown up around it. And one who looks at the place and compares it with the historical accounts, might raise plausible objections to the fact of there having been a battle there. The very ground is not as it is described to have been when the redoubt was thrown up in the night and the early morning, and was further made defensible with the help of fence-rails and new-mown hay.

But the monument testifies that the battle was fought there; and it will bear the same testimony one thousand, two thousand, or three thousand years hence, unless an earthquake or some other great convulsion shall overthrow it.

Such enduring monuments to the truth of history are found in many parts of the world.

They are sure witnesses to the unlearned that those who have written the narratives of past events have not been deceivers.

There is also a monument of another kind, which may be equally or more enduring, and is more widely known. It is the observance of the Fourth of July as our national birthday. This commemoration of the act by which we came to be a distinct nation could not possibly have become an established custom in our country, if the act which it celebrates had not been done. There is no possibility that the return of this day every year should be observed as it is, being made a national holiday and jubilee, celebrated everywhere, oftener with reading the Declaration of Independence than otherwise, if that declaration had not been made, and if we had not begun our national existence by it.

Then also the Declaration itself is another monument to the truth of history with regard to our national beginning. Thousands of years from this time that document will remain a proof that the story of our separation from

Great Britain and of our taking our place among the nations of the earth is true.

Are there alike enduring monuments witnessing to the facts of the Christian religion, so there can be no mistake in regarding them as facts?

There are such monuments. It is sometimes asked, "How do we know that Jesus Christ ever existed, and that his whole history, as given to us, is not a fiction?" I reply, we know by the monuments which confirm the history.

1. Our method of marking the SUCCESSION OF YEARS is a monument that proves the existence of Jesus Christ as the founder of the Christian religion. In all our dates this year we write 1867. It is the same whether we write a letter, a business account, a legal document, or a state paper. And so it is all over the world. Wherever Christianity exists, this is the way in which men mark the year. They call it in Latin *Anno Domini;* in English, the year of our Lord, the year of Christ, the year of the Christian era. How was this method

of naming the year introduced? How came it to be established? It is understood to be in commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian religion. We find the Christian religion existing and prevailing in a large part of the world, and that the most intelligent, the most enterprising, the most wealthy, the most moral, the most powerful part of the world. And as we trace back the course of years we find this mode of marking time pointing always to the birth of Christ. Could this have been if Christ had not lived and been the founder of Christianity? Surely we can not suppose it possible. Here then is one monument to the facts of the Christian religion. And with this agrees all the history of the Christian world.

2. A second monument to the truth of the Christian history, and so of Christianity, is the Christian CHURCH in the world. Here it is. It exists in various parts of the earth and in various forms. How came it to be? The history of the world and the history of the church trace back its existence to the life of

Christ on earth, to his miracles, his teachings, his death and resurrection, and the ministry of his apostles. Any amount of learning may be, has been, employed in tracing out this history and the progress of the church, with its variations and different parts, from the beginning till now. Disputes may be found and doubts raised as to some particular events. But the existence of the Christian religion as received by a portion of mankind from the time of Christ, acknowledging the Bible as their book of instruction and authority, themselves professing to believe the Bible and to follow Christ, — this living present fact remains palpable to all men. It can not be denied by any. It stands out before the world everywhere. The Christian religion has spread in some degree over all the world. It is not now, as it once was, a little thing found only in one place. But in all civilized nations, certainly, are those who are called after the name of Christ, and profess to receive him as their Saviour.

Does this prove the truth of Christianity?

you may ask. It proves that Christ was not a fabulous being, but a real character, who exerts a mighty influence in the world. To know what sort of character he was, what he claimed to be, and whether he was what he claimed to be, we must go to the history of his life and teachings and death, and the progress of his influence through the ministry and teachings of his followers. The existence of the Christian religion in the world is a monument to the reality of Christ's life and influence in the world.

3. The two ordinances of the Christian Church, BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER, are another like monument. I put the two together because they are so much alike in their relation to the Christian religion. They are found wherever the church of Christ exists. They are said to be ordinances of his appointment. Such is the account of them in the New Testament. Is it possible that they could have come into observance in any other way? Has there been any time when they could have

been brought in, if they had not been appointed by the Master himself?

There are two important things in relation to them, — their existence, and their appointment by the Lord himself. Can it be supposed that baptism arose as an ordinance in the church of Christ at any time since he lived? Would there not then be some account of it, and some reason given for it? If he did not direct his disciples to go and preach the gospel, baptizing those who believed, how came this ordinance to exist, and the statement also that he directed it? Could anybody at any time, between the day when Christ was on earth and this day, have contrived this introductory ordinance of the church and brought it into use?

And so of the Lord's Supper. We have it as appointed by Christ himself in remembrance of his death. As such it comes to us. It has this meaning or design, — to keep in remembrance his death. "This is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." To the same purpose is the statement of Paul, "For as often as ye eat this bread and

drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Now, supposing the ordinance was not instituted at the time given, is it possible that Christians could afterward have been persuaded to adopt it as then having been instituted? Surely, if it had been proposed in later times as a new thing, they would have said, "We never heard of this before. If Christ died for us and gave us this to be observed in remembrance of his death, why have we not known it till now?" Therefore it never could have been brought into use at a later time. It must have existed from the beginning, as a memorial of Christ's death. And if the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, the gospel history of his death is true. It is testified by this enduring monument.

4. The CHRISTIAN SABBATH is another such monument. We find existing among us the division of time into weeks of seven days each, and the observance of the first day of the week as the Sabbath, the day of special religious worship. In the thoroughly Christian

communities we find it observed as a day of rest from common labor, of abstinence from the common business and pleasures of the world, and employed in worship and other religious services.

Whence came this observance? How have men been led to divide the days by sevens rather than by sixes or eights or tens? Where did they get this division of days into weeks of seven each? If we take the Bible history, and go back to the creation of the world, we find it; and we do not find it anywhere else.

Even then we do not find the Sabbath as the first day of the week, but the seventh. Yet as the first day we have it. And how? When was it introduced? By what means and why was the change made from the seventh day to the first day?

If the gospel history be true, and Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, it is natural that the first day should be observed by his disciples as their special day of worship, and so should for all Christians take the place of the seventh day. And how otherwise could

it have been introduced among men as a special day of worship?

So the Sabbath is a monument witnessing to the truth of the gospel history; witnessing that Christ, after he was crucified, rose from the dead, and that the Christian religion is true, and is of God.

5. Another monument is the BIBLE. Here we have a large book, not new, certainly, but long known, and held in the highest estimation as superior to any other book in worth and importance. It is often said to be worth more than all other books. Where did it come from? How has it come to have such a place in the judgment of many people both learned and unlearned? It is reputed to have a special authority and excellence as God's book, produced by his inspiration. Among Christians generally it is regarded as the great source of religious instruction, the treasury of divine truth from which all men may draw that knowledge of God, and the way to secure his favor, which they need. It so stands alone and above all other books as to be called *the Word*

of God, and *the Bible*, or *the book*, as if there were no other book. It has often been said that men have a superstitious reverence for it. And perhaps they have. It is very easy for many people to be superstitious. But many, certainly, have a great reverence for the Bible, who do not generally show themselves superstitious.

Now, I ask, How is it that the Bible has such a great place in the world, and such great influence among men? How has it come to pass that many of the best men, and not a few of the ablest men, think so highly of it? If it is a book in which the world is taught religious truth by God himself, all this respect and veneration are reasonable. If it is not such a book, but only one having in it many good and true things produced by men in times past, without any special help of God, as other books are made, all those who think so very highly of it are mistaken.

I remember that a few years ago a very learned and able man, who had not any peculiar reverence for the Bible, though he pro-

fessed to be a preacher of the truth, said that the preachers who hold up the Bible as the infallible word of God do not dare to tell the people that it was made up of a great many different parts, written by many different persons in widely different periods of time. To tell them these facts he thought would destroy that reverence for the Bible as God's book of eternal truth which the ministers of the Christian religion commonly teach. But Theodore Parker, with all his learning and ability, must have been ignorant of what is familiar to most of the teachers in our Sabbath schools and to many of the scholars, — of what indeed is familiar to all the most intelligent common Christians. For those very facts which, he said, ministers would be afraid to have generally known, are matters of common instruction by them, and of common knowledge among intelligent Christian people.

The common fact is, and is well known to be, that the Bible is the subject of study by Christian ministers themselves, — is acknowledged by them as of the highest authority;

and it is their general practice to urge the people, also, to make it the subject of their study, and to learn all they can about it. They present it everywhere as worthy to be put to the test of constant inquiry and examination. And generally those who bring it to this test in the most thorough manner are the most fully convinced of its superior worth and authority. Especially is it true that the best men among us, who give careful and constant attention to the Bible, are the most fully satisfied that God speaks to us in it the words of his eternal truth and love, for our salvation from sin and death.

Therefore do I say that the Bible, as it exists among us, the subject of constant study, the source of constant instruction, received generally by those most thoroughly acquainted with it and so most competent to judge, as giving us a revelation from God, is a monument to the truth of the Christian religion. And the more we look upon it, and see that light and love have gone out from it for ages, blessing the world with peace and good

will in proportion as men have received and obeyed its teachings, the more does it appear an enduring monument witnessing to the truth and goodness of the Christian religion.

These five enduring memorials, testifying to the material facts in the Christian religion, are worthy of serious consideration by all who wish to know the truth on the momentous question, whether God has spoken to us in the Bible, and by his Son, Jesus Christ. The first, our manner of marking the years as they pass, is a witness to the real existence of Christ. The second, the existence of the Christian religion in the world, is a monument of his mighty influence. The third, the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, — regarding the two as one monument, — testify of his teachings and his death. The fourth, the Sabbath, is a monument of his resurrection. And the fifth, the Bible, sets before the world the means of his power, the store-house of influences going forth to bless men with salvation.

And here let me ask, in conclusion, are not these proofs that Christianity is a matter of

reality and importance enough to demand that we give our attention to it in earnest, and secure for ourselves the blessings which it brings? Can any one act reasonably who neglects it?

If Christ lived and taught, and died and rose from the dead, and sent forth his gospel that we might believe it and be saved by it, how can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

The words of warning which Paul uttered in addressing the Jews at Antioch are applicable to us: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of by the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE.

"But the word of our God shall stand for ever." — Is. xl. 8.

THE passage in which we find this declaration is quoted in the New Testament by the apostle Peter in his first Epistle. It is not given by the apostle fully and exactly, but generally and in substance. Isaiah says, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Peter says, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth

for ever." He adds, "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

We often call the Bible the word of God, because we believe it contains God's revelation to men of his will, of the principles of his government, and of the way in which he will bless and save them for ever. And it is neither unnatural nor unreasonable to take the expression of the prophet, "The word of our God," as meaning the Bible. If it did not mean, as used by him, exactly what we mean by the word, yet certainly we suppose its meaning is contained in the Bible, because we suppose God speaks to us in it; and that which he speaks is his word.

In the preceding chapter on the monumental proofs of Christianity, the Bible was mentioned as one of them. I propose now to look at it as being of itself a very strong proof of the truth of the Christian religion.

1. The REPUTATION of the Bible as giving men a revelation is strong evidence for the Christian religion. I refer now especially to the reputation it has, among intelligent people

and in all the most enlightened countries of the world, of containing a revelation from God for the benefit of men.

As you go into a library and take up one book after another, if you ask the character of each, you receive the answer of those who are well informed, generally, according to the facts. About some books there is entire agreement. About some there is great diversity of opinion. About a few there is little known as to their authorship and character. But when you find a book which is well known, which has been much read and studied, of which the language and facts and doctrines are familiar to many people, you will certainly have no hesitation in taking the opinion of those best acquainted with it as likely to be correct. Those who have given it little attention can not judge so well of it as those who have given it much. But if there is a general agreement among those who are acquainted with the book as to its character, there is certainly strong reason to believe that their opinion is right. If many have had opportunity of reading the book, so as to make

themselves well informed concerning its contents and character, and if most of those who have learned what they could, substantially agree in relation to it, we may reasonably conclude that they have formed a right judgment. And we can not reasonably conclude anything else.

Now this is just the fact with regard to the Bible. It is well known. It is a common book. Many people have read it and studied it, so as to have a good knowledge of its language, facts, and teachings. And the great majority of those who have given it so much attention as to know what there is in it, believe that it is a revelation from God. It is commonly called the word of God, because it is generally believed by those who know much about it that he speaks to us in it. This is its general reputation among the most intelligent and sober-minded people who are acquainted with it, among those who are the most competent, by their knowledge and by their attention to the matter, to form a correct judgment.

And this reputation of the Bible is a stronger

proof in its favor, because it is called in question. There are those, and there have always been those, who doubted or denied that the Bible gives us a revelation from God. In some instances, persons have made themselves well acquainted with it, and yet have not been convinced that its reputation and title as the word of God are well founded. But generally, among those who have examined it, there is an assent to its title and its reputation; and among those who have examined it the most carefully and thoroughly there is a warm approval of its claims.

This proof is strong enough, surely, to demand that every one who would be reasonable and would know the truth should examine the book for himself. Especially is this the fact when we consider that the people who take it for the word of God are not, as a class, the weak, the uninformed, nor the evil-minded. In a Protestant Christian land, where the book is the most common and best known, they are a very large part of the people; and they include most of those who may be called well-disposed,

well-informed, sober-minded and sensible. If you take out those who have neglected to give it any considerable attention, and ask the opinion of only those who have made themselves acquainted with its contents, its character and its claims, you will find that nearly all of them acknowledge it as the word of God. This reputation of the Bible, I repeat, is such a proof in favor of its importance and its divine authority as calls upon every one who would know the truth to examine the book for himself.

2. And here is a second proof in its favor: the book OFFERS ITSELF FOR EXAMINATION. It does not seek concealment, but asks to be thoroughly searched out. It courts inquiry, honest, earnest, fair-minded. Come to the Bible and see what there is in it. Do not look for what is not, but for what is, — the great plain facts and truths, or teachings. Do not expend all your examination on the dark or doubtful things, those which are hard to be understood; but give your attention to its eternal law of truth and right, to God's presence in all its history,

to his promises and providences favoring that which is good and warning against that which is evil, to his revelations by prophets and apostles, and more than all others by Jesus Christ, his Son. Look into the things which are really and plainly in this one book, and not in other books, except as drawn from this. Look into them carefully. Examine them as fully as you can. The book offers itself to you for examination, not for a blind reception.

Imposture always seeks concealment. It clothes itself with mystery. It strives to make the impression of something above the knowledge of ordinary mortals, and above their power of attaining knowledge. It claims to be among the wonders of the world. Sometimes it lifts the veil of mystery a little, and so pretends to imitate the discoveries of true science. But never does it invite a thorough examination like the Bible. Search the Scriptures. No book of imposture has a standing injunction like this. But the Bible has stood before the world with this command of its chief character, its hero, ever since he was on earth.

There are two sorts of inquiry to which the Bible is exposed, and to which it calls those who seek to know its rightful claims. They are, — inquiry into its teachings and character, and inquiry into its history and influence. The first, which is internal, is an examination of what the Bible contains. The other, which is external, is an examination of all that we can learn about it outside of the book itself.

An examination of what is in the book is the most within the reach of all, the most satisfactory to a candid inquirer, and the most decisive. It is to this chiefly that the minds of men should be directed. Here the field is open to all who can read and think and judge for themselves.

You want to know more of the truth concerning God than you can learn from the material world, and more than you find by looking within yourself, or by any use of your own reason without help. Look into the Bible and see if you do not find something there to good purpose. See if the law which is there declared does not meet your own heart and con-

science as having the authority of truth and of God, so that you may reasonably say, This is the law of God. See if the presence and regulating control of God, as the Almighty Creator and ever-present Supreme Ruler, is not the most reasonable teaching about God, and the most satisfactory to the mind, and therefore to be received as truth. See if you do not find God speaking to us in Christ, coming to men, showing sympathy with our trials, compassion for our sorrows, love to our souls, and providing salvation from sin and death, as you do not find in all the world besides. The truth always, in all the world, is its own best testimony. As an honest man often carries his best recommendation in his own face and manners, so that none who know him can doubt his character, and scarcely can one who sees him even for a little time, — so the Bible carries, in the manner and character of its teachings, the best and reasonably sufficient proof that God in it gives us a revelation of his truth and love, and speaks to us the words of life eternal.

I do not forget that there are some things in

it which are hard to be understood, and some things which no *man* would have put into a divine revelation. So there are some things in the world which are hard to be understood, and some which no man would have had in it of his own choice. This agrees with the fact that man did not make the world. Does it in not the same way indicate that man did not make the Bible? It would not have been as it is, if any man, or any company of men, had made it. Human wisdom would have said, Leave out the sin of Abraham, and the sin of David, and the book of Solomon's Song. But these things were not left out. We do not know why they are in; and there are many things in the world, we do not know why. Is this any proof that God did not make the world? It is proof that we do not understand and can not explain all which he does.

I spoke of external inquiry about the Bible, to which it is exposed, and which it invites. We may inquire as far as we can about the way in which it was written, and also its history, and its position in the world of books. Those who

are able to make investigation into these matters will find them subjects of great interest. But they require more historical knowledge than is possessed by most of those for whom especially I write, in order to be well understood and appreciated. I shall therefore not now dwell on the history of the Bible. It is open to inquiry and consideration just like any other book. But there is one subject, outside of the Bible itself, which I must consider as furnishing proof of its divine origin and authority.

3. The INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE is proof of its being from God, and that God is with it in the world. Of course I can here only refer to a very few things to show its influence. It must have the greatest influence where it is the most generally known and read and reverenced, where it is in the hands of all the people, and all, or nearly all, seek to know what are its teachings. Where it is entirely unknown, the people can not be influenced by it. Where it is known but little, they can be only a little under its influence.

There are many portions of the world where the Bible is not known. Are the people in those countries as true, as intelligent, as moral, as kind, as elevated in their social habits and their intellectual life, as where the Bible is known? Certainly not. The nations and peoples among whom this book is not known are those among whom selfishness, deceit, sensuality, cruelty, oppression, violence, and all vices and iniquities, are the most prevalent and the least restrained. This is true not only among the savage and barbarous tribes of men, but among the civilized. It is true of the Asiatics as well as the Africans, — of the Hindoos and Persians as well as the Kafirs and Bechuanas. And it is a most noticeable fact, worthy of the gravest consideration, that when any people or nation or tribe come to receive the Bible and live under its influence, they become changed for the better. There are examples of this change known to every well-informed person, — examples which should call forth our admiration for the manifest and most blessed consequences which have followed the

introduction of the Bible and its religion. One such example was presented so clearly at the meeting of the American Board of Foreign Missions in October, 1864, in one of the reports accepted, that I will quote the statement which was given.

"Forty-five years ago we sent forth the first missionaries to the Sandwich Islands. The natives of those islands were at that time not only heathen but savages. They had no history and almost no traditions. They had no letters, and no foreigner had ever reduced their language to writing, or examined into its forms and structure. Their only dwellings were huts of grass. Their mechanical skill was only sufficient to construct canoes, to fabricate fish-hooks and weapons of war, to manufacture mats from grass, and a rude paper-like cloth from the bark of certain trees, and to decorate their persons with the plumage of birds. Their religion was a degrading heathenism, and their hideous idols were worshiped with human sacrifices. The family institution can hardly be said to have existed among them; for in their

practice of polygamy not only might the husband have many wives, but the wife might have many husbands ; and children were killed without scruple at the convenience, or in the anger or weariness, of parents. They had no conscience that made them ashamed of falsehood, or fraud, or of murder ; and in licentiousness, not Paphos, nor Corinth, nor Sodom, could surpass their universal and brutish degradation. From forty years of occasional intercourse with the ships of civilized and commercial nations, they had acquired nothing but new vices, new diseases, new implements of mutual destruction, and the art of distilling a fiery drink for the purpose of intoxication.

"The result of our mission, at the end of forty years from the arrival of our first missionaries, was, that the inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands had become substantially a Christian nation, recognized as such by the leading powers of Christendom.

"Our missionaries found the Hawaiians almost as naked as Adam and Eve in paradise, and quite as far from being ashamed. The peo-

ple whom they found in that condition are now decently clothed. Thousands of families are dwelling in humble but comfortable homes. Native workmen are busy in the various mechanical trades ; and, to a wide extent, habits of industry and thrift have superseded the indolence and wastefulness of savage life. The Christian Sabbath, that characteristic institution, which distinguishes British Christians on the continent of Europe, and which we have received as part of our inheritance, is observed by the Hawaiian people as generally and as carefully as it is observed in Scotland or in New England. On that day "the sound of the church-going bell" floats over the valleys and is echoed from the mountains ; and of the entire population, as large a portion as in any other Christian country answers the call to public worship. In cheerful throngs, decently appareled, they resort to Christian temples, humble but comfortable, and in many instances substantial, built by native hands and paid for mostly by native contributions. They worship the God of the Bible in their own melodious language, not

indeed with ceremonial pomp, but according to the simple ritual of Protestantism and of primitive Christianity; with prayers offered in the name of Christ; 'with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs making melody with their hearts unto God;' with the reverent hearing of God's word, and with the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper.'"

Here is an example of the influence produced by the Bible and its religion, carried by Christians to a far distant people who were in the extremest need of reform and elevation. It is an example of the disposition to do good inspired by the Bible in the Christians who went, and of its power to bless and save those to whom they went. And does it not show to every reasonable mind that God speaks to us in the Bible, and goes with Christian men and women who carry it to the heathen, and strive in Christian love and faithfulness to save them from sin and death? Does it not prove that the gospel is in our day, as it was declared by the great apostle to be, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation?

One thought more I will add on this topic. Suppose one, who is known to have lived in the selfish pursuit of pleasure or of gain, careless of God, and careless of the rights and wants of his fellow-men, careless of his own duties and wants as a spiritual and immortal being, ignorant of the Bible or utterly negligent of it, comes to be convinced of its truth and worth, acquaints himself with it, adopts it as the guide of his life, and, seeking God's help, follows its directions faithfully and perseveringly, so that the proper influence of the Bible and its religion is wrought into his life: will not that person be transformed in character and manner of life so truly and plainly that all men will take knowledge of him, not only as a Christian by name and profession, but as a good man, a child of God, showing that God is with him, and as a worthy example of what men should be? And is not this the proper influence of the Christian religion according to the Bible?

No one surely can doubt it. Let the worst man you know come to the Bible, receive it as true and from God, seek its instruction and

follow it, looking to God for help, so as to live by it, and he will be no longer a bad man, but an example of goodness. He will be a man of truth, uprightness and love, doing good to all, and acknowledged by all to be a most worthy character, as well as a true Christian.

This topic, the influence of the Bible, is of so great importance as to deserve a more extended consideration in another chapter. But from the view of it now presented, I do not hesitate to say that the influence of the Bible proves it to be from God. Its good effects prove its claims to be the word of God. And we ought to receive it. We can not reasonably neglect it. It is truth for us, and its truth alone can meet the wants of our immortal nature.

God speaks to us in the Bible. He calls us sinners to repent and turn to him, offering us his mercy and his help freely, through Jesus Christ his Son. And if we do not give heed to his call, we shut our eyes to the light, choose the way of evil, and prove that we love darkness rather than light.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits." — Matt. vii. 16.

THE test which our Saviour gave for distinguishing between true and false teachers is equally good when applied to true and false teachings or doctrines, and beliefs. It is a test of character, and the best we have, whether it be the character of a teacher, of a doctrine, or of a man. It assumes this principle: that which is good in its effects must be true. It is a sound principle and safe, and can not be reasonably denied.

We may properly apply this as a test of the Christian religion, and of the Bible, which teaches the Christian religion. If these objects of our belief, our reverence, and our love, bear the test, they ought to be received; if not, they ought to be rejected. For, "ye shall

know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." These words would be true, if they were not found in the Bible, and if they were not the words of Jesus Christ. They are not the less true now.

Man is an intellectual being, a moral being, and a social being. And whatever is good for him in these three great departments of his nature ought to be received as true to his nature.

1. What, then, is the influence of the Bible on the INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER of man?

The intellect of man is one of the principal things in which he is distinguished from the brutes that perish. An imperishable mind or spirit, that thinks and reasons, loves and hates, rejoices and grieves, as mere animals do not, and never can, by any culture or by anything of mind which they possess, raises man in the scale of existence incomparably

above them, and makes him a different order of being.

Among the things which belong to this intellectual nature is the *capacity for improvement.* There is an advancement in mind not only of individuals, but of families, of communities, of nations. And this advancement goes on from one generation to another. Thus nations make progress in the scale of intellectual life. All men are not on the same level in respect to mind; all nations are not on the same level; and all generations are not.

And it is a general fact beyond reasonable question, that Christian nations stand higher intellectually than other nations. Whatever the cause may be, the fact is certain. Nearly or quite all the discoveries and improvements in science, nearly or quite all the institutions of sound learning, and unquestionably all the efforts for general education within a period of nearly two thousand years, have been in Christian nations, where the Bible is received as giving men a revelation from God, where Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Son of God and

the Saviour of sinners, and where there is no religion but Christianity. We sometimes find skeptical men discoverers in science or eminent in scientific pursuits ; but they are always in Christian lands. There are certainly some literary institutions in countries which are not Christian ; but they are not seminaries of true and sound learning, such as elevate and ennoble the mind with the love and pursuit of truth, and guard it against error and delusion. And there are no plans and efforts for the education of all the people in any countries which are not Christian, or, indeed, in any countries where Protestant Christianity does not prevail, and where the Bible, as the word of God, is not freely given to all the people. The culture and elevation of the minds of all men is eminently a Christian work. And it strongly implies that the Christianity which suggests and urges it is from that God who cares for all men. The benevolent mind of God is so animated by infinite love that he would have the minds of all men ennobled and enlarged, as they may be, with knowledge and skill and

healthy activity. And the Christian religion, in seeking, as it does, by its light and love, to elevate the intellectual character of all men, agrees with the mind and heart of God, and so gives us strong reason to believe that it comes from him. Certainly there is no other religion in the world which does this good. And it is not done and can not be done without religion. It is not done, and can not be done, without the Christian religion.

It might be shown that the very *subjects* on which Christianity leads men to think and reason must elevate and ennoble the mind. It sets before all, as of the greatest interest and importance, subjects above the earth and earthly things. And it awakens on those subjects an immense amount of intellectual activity and power. Men to whom the Christian religion comes for truth, must think on God and Christ and heaven and hell. The eternal laws of righteousness, the government of the holy and almighty God, Jesus Christ showing forth the truth and love of God for the salvation of men, and an immortality of blessedness or woe

before all men, — these are subjects of infinite moment to those who believe the Bible. And they have a wonderfully quickening power for the mind, starting all manner of urgent thoughts, questions, and arguments. There is not likely to be stagnation of intellect where these and like matters occupy it. But there is likely to be force and sharpness and reaching out of mind toward infinite and eternal things. But I will not dwell further on this topic.

2. The influence of the Bible on the MORAL CHARACTER of men. The moral character of men is of greater importance than their intellectual character. It is more necessary to be good than to be great; not indeed for the purposes of selfishness, but for the nobler purpose of real worth. The more able a man is, doubtless the better he can look out for his own interests in the world. But the more upright, pure-minded, and kind a man is, the better it is for all around him. Accordingly the moral law, the law of eternal truth and righteousness, is the highest law under which we live. And under the government of Him who rules in

righteousness and goodness, our Father in heaven, all things must be subordinate to the moral law.

What, then, is the influence of the Bible on the moral character of men, is a greater and more decisive question than what is its influence on their intellectual character. And the more important question may be more quickly and decisively answered. The answer is known and read of all men. There is a difference between the moral ideas and habits prevailing in countries where the Bible is received as teaching God's truth, and those in countries where it is not so received. The very geographies taught in our schools tell us that there is a wide difference, and that, where the Bible is received, the people stand on a platform of moral principles and life far above those among whom it is not received. The thoughts, judgments, and reasonings of men who have not the Bible, in relation to morals, are low and unworthy, foul and base; while those of people who have the Bible are such as it teaches: for it is the standard.

This one fact, that the Bible gives to the civilized world to-day its *standard of morals*, is of the highest moment in the argument. The philosophers of antiquity, Egyptian, Greek, or Roman, and the more recent philosophers who do not receive the Bible, French, German, English, or American, have nothing to offer as rules or instructions for the moral guidance of men which surpasses the Bible, and nothing which equal the Bible, except such as are drawn from it. The best morals the world has ever known are those of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. And it is among not the least important of the wise sayings of that eminent statesman, Daniel Webster, that Christianity must be from God, and that the Sermon on the Mount is alone sufficient proof of that fact.

The manner in which right moral principles are enforced by the Bible increases the strength of this argument. The summoning of all men before God, the holy, almighty, eternal Spirit, who looks on the heart and discerns its thoughts and desires, that so their character

may be determined, is a lesson in morals which man never learned of his own heart and mind, nor of his fellow-men. And such a lesson also is in the blessings pronounced on the poor in spirit, on the meek, on those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, on the pure in heart, and on those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. And the like lessons are contained in the commands to love our enemies, to be perfect as our Father in heaven, and to lay up treasure, not on earth, but in heaven.

It is sometimes said that there are other teachings in the Bible, contrary to these lessons. But those who have the most carefully studied and compared its different parts have not found the contradiction. They have found a wonderful agreement of the different parts, the earlier and the later, with only this principle for the reconcilement of seeming discrepancies, that as the eyes become accustomed to the light they see more clearly, so it is with the eyes of the mind. Men see the truth more clearly and exactly by a larger acquaintance with it. And according to the same

order, God has made his revelation to men, at first setting forth his truth really and strongly, but not in the fullness of all which he designed to reveal, and afterward declaring more exactly and variously and completely the revelation of his truth and love. After Christ came and the Holy Spirit was given, the light of God's truth shone more largely and completely, and on many subjects more clearly, than ever before.

Let a man adopt the Bible as the standard of his life, looking to God, as it teaches him to look, for help to understand and obey it, and who doubts that he will be a model man as to his moral character? So let a community practically adopt the Bible as the standard of right living for its people, and it will be a model community in its moral character. The same would be true of a nation. And if throughout all the world the law of righteousness and the law of love, as taught and exemplified in the Bible, were received, the world would be reformed, regenerated, made glorious in the purity and truth and love everywhere blessing it.

3. Here is suggested a third topic which must be noticed: the influence of the Bible on the SOCIAL CHARACTER AND CONDITION of men. If it has been shown, as I think it has, that the Bible, with the religion it teaches, elevates the intellectual character of men and purifies their moral character, the consequence must be a vast improvement in their social character and condition. Whatever elevates the mind and purifies the heart, makes people, naturally and surely, better, happier, worthier, in their social life. Toward one another they will do justly and love mercy, they will be upright and kindly affectioned, in proportion as they have learned the law of truth and love which the Bible sets before us.

There is nothing which more illustrates the influence of the Bible than the changes wrought among a people within a limited period of time by its introduction and teachings. In the last chapter I gave a statement of such changes in the Sandwich Islands, as they were eloquently set forth in a report by Rev. Dr. Bacon of New Haven at the annual meeting of the American

Board of Foreign Missions in 1864. I will now give a statement of those changes, that was made by a native to Rev. Dr. Anderson in his visit to the Islands. This native is an old man, the senior deacon in one of the churches. His name is Timotea. The address was written by himself in his own language. I give the translation.

"The church-members of the highlands of Waimea, the old men, the aged women, the strong men, the youth and children, tender, through me, their salutation to you, the secretary, your companion, and daughter. Great indeed is our joy in being permitted to see you, to welcome you to our land. You have been sent by the learned Missionary Society of great America, as its delegate, to see the works of the gospel heralds you have sent to us.

"We, the ancient men of Kamehameha's time, were once idolaters, murderers, guilty of infanticide, polygamy, and constantly quarreling one with another.

"On the death of Kamehameha, the kingdom

devolved on his son Liholiho. He abolished idolatry, broke the tabus; men and women for the first time ate together, and the temples and gods were burned to ashes.

"Still we lived on in poverty and darkness, and in secret worship of idols, and were without the knowledge of the true God. Men, women and children were devoted to the most sordid pleasures, heathenish dances and revelries, day and night. In the year 1820, the missionaries, Mr. Bingham and company, came to these islands to proclaim the blessed gospel to us, who knew not God, nor had heard the death of Jesus, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

"It was you, the Missionary Society you represent, that loved us, and sent the good missionaries to our dark land.

"The king and his premier allowed the missionaries to dwell with us; to introduce a new order of things; to teach us first the twelve letters of the alphabet, then spelling, then reading and writing.

"During the forty-three years the mission-

aries have resided on the islands, much seed has been sown, much labor performed, and wonderful have been the results. We were once all dark, buried in darkness, sunk to the lowest depths of ignorance; roaming about the fields and woods like wild beasts; without clothing; our naked bodies most shamefully exposed, and blackened in the sun; without books, without Bibles, without Christianity; plunging into the darkness of hell. Now we are clothed like civilized beings; we are Christianized; we are gathered into churches; we are intelligent; we are supplied with books, Bibles, and hymn books; and are living for God and for heaven. And this through the labors of the missionaries you have sent us.

"Our joy is inexpressible in seeing you; and we beg you to carry back to your associates, to the Missionary Society, to all the American churches connected with it, the warmest salutations of the churches of Waimea and Hamakua."

What a statement is this by a man who had seen and known in his own experience both

the heathen and the Christian condition of his people!

I will give also one page of the statement which Dr. Anderson makes of the changes wrought among that people.

"They were without a written language. They were naked barbarians. Lying, drunkenness, theft, robbery, were universal. So was licentiousness, and it was shameless, in open day. There was no restraint on polygamy or polyandry. Mothers buried their infant children alive; and children did the same with their aged and infirm parents. As a consequence of this moral and social degradation, a deadly poison ran through the veins and arteries of the whole nation, opening the way for destructive foreign epidemics, and a rapid depopulation, which, though greatly checked by the influence of the gospel, is not yet wholly arrested. Such were the character and condition of the Hawaiian people in the early part of the last generation.

"But the people have now a written language, and are generally able to read and

write. They are clothed. The law forbids the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits, and the law, pronounced constitutional by the Supreme Court while I was there, is enforced. I did not see a drunken native while on the islands. The law forbids polygamy and polyandry, and they have passed away. Theft and robbery are less frequent than they are in the United States. We slept at night with open doors, had no apprehension, and lost nothing. Licentiousness still largely exists outside of the church, and is one of the easily besetting sins within it; but it now everywhere shuns the day, and is subjected to the discipline of the church. Nor do mothers any more bury their infant children alive, nor children their aged and infirm parents."

I have brought before you this example of the influence of the Bible and its religion to change the social character and condition of a people for the better, not because it is the only one, but because it is the most palpable and ready at hand for the illustration of the subject. The mission to the Zulus in south-eastern

Africa, the missions to the Armenians in Turkey, and to the Nestorians in Persia, if as fully reported to us, would furnish illustrations perhaps quite as impressive and wonderful. The Bible exerts the same sort of influence wherever it is carried and received; not always so rapidly and completely within the lifetime of those who first carry it, but always surely, unless it be rejected. It may be rejected by the heathen, as it may by those in Christian lands. And when rejected by savage or civilized men, it fails to change them for the better. But its tendency and proper influence can not be truly or reasonably denied.

And since a tree is known by its fruit, the Bible is a good tree; it is of God's planting. It must bring to men God's truth, because it does so great good. Because it so elevates the minds of men; because it so improves their morals, and so changes for the better the social life and character of those who receive it as from God, all men ought to receive it as from God.

The heathen who receive God's truth and

are saved by it will rise up in the judgment against those among us who do not receive it. Within the lifetime of some of you, within the years that some of you remember, those who were sunk in all the iniquities and miseries of heathenism have been raised up to the light of knowledge, though in the days of their youth without a written language, and have been made worthy examples of Christian character, though in the days of their youth associated with the cruelties and corruptions of the most debasing heathen life. And yet there are those who have known the Bible by name and by some acquaintance with its contents from their childhood, till they have passed beyond the midday of life; but they have not received it into their hearts, nor sought to know it as teaching the truth and love of God and the way of salvation. And what shall become of them? How shall they stand before the Judge of all the earth; before him who speaks in the Bible and says, "This is the way, walk ye in it"?

CHAPTER IV.

MAN'S NEED OF A REVELATION.

"Who will show us any good?"—Ps. iv. 6.

THIS is said to be the question of many. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? And if it had been given as what all men say it might have been accepted for truth. Scarcely can there be found any more universal inquiry.

The good which men seek is of various kinds. With many it is earthly, sensual, and unworthy of the high capacity of immortal beings. And one of the strongest arguments against the immortality of man is, that so many seek to satisfy themselves with earthly things, and seem to have no desires that reach above the things of this world. But many also inquire for something else. And all, when they see and feel how quickly the things of the

earth are passing away, are sometimes compelled to look beyond, and to say concerning the unseen, the unknown infinite and eternal, Who will show us any good?

There is a craving of the human heart for something which man can not supply to himself, and something which the world can not give. Man asks for knowledge beyond the range of his own experience and observation, beyond all that he can learn from the world in which we live. What thoughtful mind has not been awakened to inquire, at times, with intense earnestness, for some definite knowledge of God? What ideas should we have of him? What thoughts concerning him are true and right? Who can tell?

1. And this is the first craving of the mind to which I ask your notice. WHO CAN TELL US OF GOD?

We can not deny that He exists. No one can say there is no God. Or if any be so foolish, it is easy to retort upon him the question, How do you know? And all the answer he can give is, in substance, this: "I do not be-

lieve there is a God. There are a great many difficulties in the way of crediting it. For if there were a God who made the world and governs it, a perfect, almighty Being, it would not be such a mixture of good and evil, such a contradictory, confused, perplexing, and on the whole such a miserable world as it is. A perfect, almighty God would surely make a perfect world, if he made any." And so they who deny that God exists draw their arguments from the mysteries of the world in which we live, and sit in judgment on what he should do, in order to make their denial have any appearance of reason.

But we can not reasonably deny that God exists. We are compelled, if we will be reasonable, to believe in God. Since man, the highest intelligence we know on earth, is dependent, according to all experience, and is accountable, according to the law within him, our reason requires us to believe there is a higher intelligence, on whom we are dependent, and to whom we must give account. And what is that higher intelligence? Supposing

that he is the Almighty One and the Supreme Ruler, who will tell us anything more about him? What shall we think of his character? What is the law of his kingdom? How shall we secure his favor? By what manner of life shall we have him for our friend, our protector, our helper in time of need, our refuge in every extremity? Can we trust in him? Who will show us? our reason cries. Who will give us an assurance that we may trust in him at all times?

Of the world we ask in vain. Of our own craving hearts we ask in vain. And where shall we turn, whither shall we go, to satisfy our anxious inquiry?

Must we think of the Creator as having made the world, and set it in order at first, but now not caring for it? And is it thus that the disorders we find are to be explained, so far as there is any explanation? Has the Maker of all things left them to go without his regulating hand? And is it so that they go strangely, as it seems to us, sometimes wrong and sometimes right? Who can tell?

The great course of events moves in an orderly way. Science, without revelation, teaches that there are certain fixed laws of motion and of power; laws of nature, as they are called. So we have day and night. So we have the rotation of the seasons, and the succession of the years. So we have birth and life and death. And is this course of law all? Is God the laws of nature personified, and nothing more? This is the teaching of some men's philosophy. Is it true? Can any one tell us so clearly as to satisfy our anxiety?

We want to know if God has a kindly regard for his intelligent creatures. There are many things in the operations and tendencies of his works which indicate wisdom and goodness. But there are also many terrible things, which it is impossible, with our little knowledge, to make appear consistent with wisdom and goodness guiding and animating almighty power. And is there a human soul anywhere who does not sometimes ask, with intense earnestness, What is the truth concerning the wisdom and goodness of God? Does he love men in

and through, or possibly even above his eternal law of justice? May we look up to him as our Father? In all the solemn sternness of law and justice, which must abide for ever as surely as truth and right, may we still trust and love God as having toward us a Father's heart of love? What can we think of God? How can we suppose he looks upon us? We know that we are weak and sinful. Does he stand afar off and leave us to our own weakness in temptation and sin? Or does he regard us kindly, compassionately, lovingly even, in all our wants and all our sorrows, — yes, in all our wickedness? Who can tell us? Where shall we find anything clear and sure?

If God has not spoken to men, if he has made no revelation to the world, if he has not manifested himself so that he may be known, there is no satisfactory answer to these questions. Then all is darkness above us. Thick clouds cover the face of him whom we need to see shining above the brightness of the sun. He is hid from us, whom we need to see com-

ing as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams.

But if we admit the full truth of the statement, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" then light breaks in upon us, and we begin to see that these questions may be answered. We need no longer walk in darkness; for the sun shines upon us from on high. God has spoken, and we have only to hear his words. Nay, more; God was manifest in the flesh, that we might see his glory, and learn to trust him as our Father and our God.

2. But there is another subject on which man has a craving for some knowledge that is not satisfied without the Bible.

We want to know something of THE LIFE TO COME. We want to know for a certainty whether there be a life to come. Doubtless there may be grounds for an opinion on this important question without a revelation from

God. And yet who can feel so sure if God has not spoken as he can if God has spoken? If we do not find anything revealed in the Bible more than in other books, if we do not see the light of God's truth in it, as it speaks of that which shall be hereafter, how can we be satisfied that we have any certainty about the hereafter? Who shall tell us, if God has not told us? As we have an earthly life in common with other animals, and we can not, by our unaided ken, see anything beyond it, and as without the Bible we know not that any one has ever spoken to men after going beyond the life of this world, how do we know certainly that there is anything beyond? How do we know that men really are living after they have passed away from this life?

There is a fashion of thinking, just now, that some of those who have passed away, by tipping tables, or rapping against tables, or in some other way, by some sort of medium, speak to persons still among the living. And what does it all amount to? What actual information is given by all the facts that are re-

ported? Indeed, can any one tell what real facts are reported, and what is only pretense?

All that I know of the matter shows plainly that man has a craving for some knowledge of what shall be after death; and it shows nothing else so plainly. Man can not be satisfied without something which he can take for information about that which is before him. He asks, What is that dark unknown into which I am going? And some are ready to believe almost anything which seems to answer, even partially, this question. Yet the facts reported do not profess to come from God, nor have much to do with God. They purport to come from men who have gone out of this life, and give not the least information concerning the ways or the judgments of the Almighty. They have on them no stamp of divine authority, no appearance even of being a revelation from the Creator. Indeed, they make little or no reference to him. So far as generally appears, they might be the same if there were no God. And this fact makes them a matter of little or no consequence. They address our craving for

some knowledge of what shall be hereafter; but they do not satisfy it. They do not tell us what God will do with us. They do not tell what he would have us do in preparation for the life to come. *He* does not speak by them. It is not even pretended that he speaks by them. And so our craving for some knowledge of the untried, unknown things after death remains. If we have no revelation from God, we have nothing which meets this intense want of our souls. So far as we can satisfy ourselves that he speaks on the subject, this want is met, and no further.

We need the voice of God's word speaking with authority to tell us of the hereafter.

3. We need a revelation from God for the assurance that OUR SINS MAY BE FORGIVEN. We need it both for the knowledge of the fact that sin may be forgiven, and for the knowledge of the way in which we may obtain pardon. To know that we may be forgiven, and the way in which we may be forgiven, — this is indeed one of the most urgent wants which we can feel. There is no necessity of our existence that can

press upon us more heavily and sharply than this.

The fact that we are sinners, when the conscience is fully awakened to it, is distressing beyond endurance. It fills the soul with remorse, which eats into it like a worm that never dies. It makes God in his truth and goodness seem like an enemy. Sin, our own sin, turns the very goodness of God against us; or rather it so blinds us to his love as to make us feel that he hates us. It puts us under the condemnation of the eternal law of right. By that law, perfect and unchangeable, there appears to be no hope for the sinner. And if that be God's law, how can he forgive us? This is the most momentous question for us sinners which can be asked. And it needs a revelation from God to answer it.

I know that there is a great deal of insensibility about sin, and that many people do not seem to have much feeling of it. Their consciences seem dead. Only when they commit some unusual iniquity do they feel deeply that they are sinners. And they often think that

God can not be severe on such weak and tempted beings as we are. They say to themselves, Sin is almost as much our misfortune as our fault.

But still there is a latent kind of conviction and fear, a restless anxiety and dread about that which is to come. In the busy occupations of life it is not much felt. But when trouble and disease come, and death is seen drawing near, a heavy load presses upon the soul. And then the question of all questions comes up: Who can tell how we may find pardon for sin? How may we have peace with God, so that we shall not fear to meet him? He must be holy and just, and his law can not change. Can his goodness, then, and his wisdom and love, find a way of forgiveness and blessing and salvation for the sinner? Can this be? Is it possible?

Nothing short of a revelation from God can satisfy the questioner. Human conjectures and hopes and reasonings are not enough, in such a case, to give the soul rest. We need a word of God, saying to us plainly, "Your sins

may be forgiven. There is a way of pardon, peace, and eternal life open to you. Holy and just as God is, he can forgive, and is ready to forgive your sins, even the greatest and worst, and to bestow on you his abundant love and blessing."

All the miseries of sin which men suffer, the self-tortures of the heathen, throwing themselves under their idol cars, or measuring the ground with their prostrate bodies through long pilgrimages; and the suicide of more enlightened sinners, when the madness of unbridled passions has unbalanced the mind; and the more quiet yet distressing fears of evil to come, in consequence of sin, all testify to men their need of a revelation from God.

And no wisdom of the wise men, nor dreams and marvelous stories of the less wise, will meet this want. To give the soul light and peace and rest and hope, satisfying hope, God must speak to us, and we must hear his word. This and only this will answer the craving of our souls for some clear knowledge of God, for some sure truth concerning the life to come,

and for the assurance that our sins may be forgiven, and God may be well pleased with us when we repent, though our sins be so great. We need such a revelation as the Bible claims to be.

But an unbeliever may ask, Does this prove that the Bible is true? Do our wants prove that they are provided for? Because a man is hungry, is it certain that a dinner will be given him, when he can not buy it nor earn it? No, indeed. And I do not bring forward these cravings of the soul, continually crying out, Who will show us any good? as proof that we have a revelation from God. But they do prove that we need it. And this being the fact, if God is good, we might reasonably suppose that he would give such a revelation. It seems credible, altogether in agreement with his goodness, that he should bestow on us such a needed gift.

Has he done so? This question remains. And for the answer to it we can say, Many people think he has. Many of the best people in the best parts of the world think that God

has given us in the Bible a revelation concerning himself, his law, his government of the world, his goodness to men, concerning the life to come and the sure way of promise for it, concerning the pardon of sin and the way to be certain of God's blessing on the penitent sinner. They assure us that the more they understand the Bible, the more they receive and appreciate its sense and purpose, the more it meets the cravings of their spiritual nature, and the more they are satisfied that God speaks to us in it.

Now, surely, this testimony is worthy to be received so far as to lead all men who wish to know the truth to search the Scriptures for themselves, and see if they can find God speaking to them in this book. The craving of our minds, and the testimony of those who believe the truth of the Christian religion, urge us, honestly, earnestly, candidly, to seek for the truth in relation to it, by an examination of its book of instruction. We say the best proof is in the book itself, in the wonderful facts and truths it declares, in its meeting the wants of

our souls, and especially in the spiritual comfort and healing it brings us. And so we advise others to take the remedy which we have found by our own experience to be good for us. We entreat you to make a fair trial of it, for we are sure it will do you good. You have the same need of it that we have. It will meet your wants as it meets ours.

Do not stumble on farther without God in the world; without a good hope for the life to come; without peace by the sure forgiveness of sin, in the darkness of unbelief, exposed hourly, instantly, to fall into a death of utter darkness. Do not so wander and stumble and fall; for the light does shine from the throne of God, in the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness, to guide you in the way of truth and peace and life eternal.

CHAPTER V.

THE WONDERFUL HISTORY OF CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." — Heb. xiii. 8.

THESE remarkable words place directly before us the Lord Jesus Christ in his highest character. But my design in this chapter is to ask your attention to him as he is presented in the New Testament historically. I wish to set before you in this way the question whether such a history could have been written, whether such a character could have been placed before the world, if the accounts were not substantially true. Can we reasonably believe that the gospel narratives are fictions, or material exaggerations of a real character? On the decision of this question depends the truth and importance of the Christian religion.

Let us then look, with the most careful and candid, the sharpest, deepest and truest examination we can make, into this account so commonly received. Let us see if there was such a person, and if we are convinced there was, whether he was quite unlike any other who ever appeared in the world; whether he is in truth, as Christians believe, the revealer of God, the light of the world, the Saviour of sinners. For this purpose I will make, as briefly as I can, a statement of the most important facts in the life of Jesus Christ as they are given in the gospel histories.

1. The first is, of course, HIS BIRTH. The narrative states that Jesus was born of Mary, having no human father, by the miraculous power of God. The announcement was made to her beforehand of the strange, unheard-of event, and that her son should be the Son of God, and a king of whose kingdom there should be no end.

But at his birth he was in no superior condition. He ranked among the poor. The offering which his mother and his reputed

father brought to the temple on the occasion was of the kind appointed by the Jewish law for the poor: two turtle doves and two young pigeons, instead of a lamb and a young pigeon. There was nothing in the condition and prospects of his infancy, as they must have appeared to human sagacity, adapted to disturb the mind of any man in power. But Herod was alarmed at hearing that a child was born in Bethlehem, who was to be a king. And yet the child was so obscure and unknown that only by destroying all the children in the place of nearly the same age could the tyrant cut off this one. And he was not cut off in this way. Joseph and Mary fled with the child, at a divine warning, into Egypt, till the danger was past. Then they returned and dwelt in their own city, Nazareth. "And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

This, in substance, is all we know of his infancy. Nothing is told to gratify curiosity, nothing to show what promise he gave of a

wonderful life. Concerning all such things there is entire silence.

2. A glimpse is once only given of HIS CHILDHOOD. After the annual visit of the family to Jerusalem for the observance of the Passover, when the child was twelve years old, as they were returning, he was missed from the company with which they traveled. And after three days' search he was found, not among his kinsfolk and acquaintance, but in the temple, in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." And well they might be, for he was a boy of only twelve years, in a family of common rank.

And surely the wonder which he excited was not diminished by the answer that he gave to the gentle chiding of his mother: "How is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

This glimpse shows that there must have been many wonderful things in his childhood

and early youth. But they are all passed by, — left out of the history. This only we know: Mary kept all these things mentioned, and the like of them, and pondered them in her heart. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

3. HIS ENTRANCE ON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, at thirty years of age, is the next thing we find about him.

John, that austere man, who lived apart from society and preached repentance, with its proper fruits in reformation of life, directed the attention of those who heard him to one among them mightier than he. Shortly that mightier one came to be baptized by him. And when he was baptized, the heavens were opened, and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Jesus. He heard also a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Why was he thus baptized? The history does not tell us, but only that, when the baptizer objected, as himself needing a baptism by Jesus, he insisted on it as a proper obedience

to the law of righteousness. On what account it was so proper we have no information. It may have been designed for a formal entrance upon the public service which he then begun; and it was the occasion of God's formal acknowledgment of his well-beloved Son. As there was a miracle wrought in order that he might come into the world by being born of a woman, so there was a miracle here in his being avowed as the Son of God, when he came to enter on his public service in the world.

It would be natural to speak here of his *miracles*. But they are of such peculiar character and importance that I reserve the consideration of them for another chapter in which more attention can be given them. I will only say now that the miracles performed by him, according to the accounts given of his life, are altogether in agreement with the miracles relating to his birth and his baptism. They are very wonderful, in the manifestation by him of power and authority. They were of frequent occurrence; and it may not be possible to

avoid some reference to them in noticing his manner of life.

His *teachings* also come in order for consideration, as we are giving attention to the course of his life. But these, too, are of so much importance that greater attention must be given them than can be in this general notice of his history.

4. I pass on, therefore, to consider HIS MANNER OF LIFE. As already mentioned, very little is told us concerning his life before his baptism. He lived at Nazareth with his mother and his supposed father; and he honored them by his obedience. As he is called afterward the carpenter's son, we know what Joseph's occupation was; and we have good reason to believe that in his early youth he was engaged in the same employment. We are not told how his years from twelve to nearly thirty were spent; but the very natural and reasonable belief is that he worked with his own hands in mechanical labor.

After his baptism he seems to have had no constant place of residence. He was some-

times at Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he spent more of his time in Galilee than in other parts of the country. But he visited Jerusalem several times; found a welcome and frequent place of rest and refreshment in the family of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, at Bethany; was the guest sometimes of Peter, and of others among the common people. From this class he selected his disciples and most intimate friends. The only rich man at whose house it is mentioned that he made a visit, is Zaccheus, the publican. He went there self-invited, but according to the eager desire of the man to know him, and that he might receive for a disciple one whom the Jews abhorred for his office of tax collector for the Roman government.

Jesus had no home. This is a marked fact in his manner of life. He had no family establishment. He did not own a house. He did not own anything, for he had not where to lay his head. He did not choose to become the holder of real estate or any kind of property. If he can be said to have had an occu-

pation, he was a teacher by his words, and a doer of good by his miracles. He went from place to place, attracting many to him by his words of wisdom, truth, and power, and by his wonderful works.

Of the many who were led to receive his teachings, he chose twelve to be his constant attendants. They were with him as familiar friends, obedient and trustful followers, learning from the wisdom that continually flowed from his lips and his life. They believed him to be the Son of God, the anointed One, the great king whom they understood to be foretold by their national prophets. They expected him to set up a kingdom in the world. And they doubtless had some worldly expectations in following him. They seem to have cherished such expectations up to the time of his arrest, trial, and execution. And even afterward, when he rose from the dead, these worldly ideas were revived in their minds, so that they asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But he steadily rejected every suggestion of a

worldly kingdom. While avowing himself a king, he declared by all his conduct as well as by express words at last, "My kingdom is not of this world." His relatives sometimes, and his followers also, spoke of his kingdom. But he, though he declared that the kingdom of God was at hand and plainly assumed to be its king, formed no plans for worldly power, and abstained from all connection with it.

He had in a wonderful degree the popular favor. He was especially interested in the common people. He associated with them in preference to what are commonly called the higher classes. It seems as if he might easily have organized them for any enterprise which men could effect by plans and combinations of numbers. But he did not attempt any organization whatever. Even the Christian church grew up from the company of his followers, without any plan which he had expressly set before them, by the use of two rites which he had appointed for them, and in other respects just as the circumstances of their condition led them to associate. So far was he from

making for himself a party among men, or seeking for himself power in the world.

Yet he was by no means recluse in his habits. On the contrary, he mingled freely and easily in society. He was friendly and compassionate toward the poor, and severe only toward the rich and prosperous, when they were selfish and not considerate of the poor. In behalf of the suffering and the helpless he wrought many of his miracles. Even toward the guilty he was tender-hearted. "Go and sin no more," he said to the adulterous woman on whom his enemies tried to make him give judgment.

He was wonderful for the skill and wisdom with which he encountered opposition. The most crafty enemies could not catch him in his talk. Though not educated in learning, he knew the hearts of men so well that none could deceive him. And so he lived in the midst of enemies, without a home, without friends of influence or power, without any plans or efforts for worldly success or worldly interests. He just went from place to place

with his disciples, talking to them and to other people so as to fill his friends with wonder and admiration, and so as to baffle his enemies.

And as he drew near the end of his course, according to the history, he lived in constant expectation of it. He made preparation not to avoid but to meet the violent death which came upon him. He lived looking forward to it. Nay, he even declared that he laid down his life of himself; that no man could take it, but he had power to lay it down and take it again.

5. We come now to consider HIS DEATH AND THE ATTENDING CIRCUMSTANCES. In all the four narratives there is no sign that he expected to live longer than he did, or that he made any plans which were defeated by his death. On the contrary, it appears that he did just what he intended, and all that he intended. And his death, instead of being a surprise to him, or a disappointment of his plans in life, was according to his expectations and repeated declarations, — was in fact the result of his life to which he looked forward. It

was not only according to the plan of God that he should die as he did, as all events are, but according to his own personal plan of life. He *chose* the course of life which he knew would end in the death he suffered. And he repeatedly signified to his disciples what death he should die. He even taught them that the very death which he experienced was necessary to complete the purpose of his life. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die." They did not understand it then, but afterward they did. And afterward they understood the object of his death as they did not before.

In several things the death of Christ is represented as remarkable.

(1.) It was *voluntary.* It was not by compulsion, or for the want of power to resist and to escape, that he submitted to the will of his enemies. They could have had no power against him if he had not yielded himself to them. But it was the plan of God, and his plan, that he should die for his people. "I lay

down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

Accordingly, when the band, guided by Judas, went to arrest him, he declared himself Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought; and they went backward and fell on the ground. Thus in their very act of making him a prisoner he made them feel his power to resist them if he chose. But he did not choose to resist. He yielded himself to their will. He even reproved Peter, who, in the excitement of the moment, struck off the ear of the servant Malchus; and he healed the ear with his touch. Then he submitted himself to the mockery of a trial before Caiaphas, the high priest, and the council of the chief priests and scribes, and also before Pilate, the Roman governor.

(2.) His death was *sought and procured* by leading and influential men among the Jews. They secured his arrest. They condemned

him to death in their own way first, and then took him to the Roman governor to have their condemnation ratified and carried into effect. They condemned him to death as guilty of blasphemy. But this crime was not against Roman law, and could not be noticed by a Roman magistrate. So before Pilate they accused him of seeking to make himself a king. And they brought up his claim to be a king as proof of their accusation. To this he simply replied, "My kingdom is not of this world." The reply was sufficient. It agreed with the whole course of Jesus' life. And Pilate himself declared that he found no fault in him. The representative of the great Roman Empire proposed then to the multitude of the Jews that he should release Jesus, according to a custom of allowing the release of a prisoner by their request at the Passover. He knew, doubtless, that the people had been drawn in large numbers to hear this wonderful teacher, and that the chief priests and elders sought his death from their malicious envy. But now the people, influenced by wicked

leaders, preferred Barabbas, and demanded that Jesus should be crucified. Pilate yielded to the urgency of the Jewish priests and people, and condemned one whom he knew to be innocent to the death of the cross.

(3.) This was not a Jewish but a *Roman* mode of execution. If the Jews had been an independent nation and not subject to the Roman government, he would not have been put to death in this way. And if the Roman ruler had been fearlessly just, and not weakly wicked, he would not have been put to death in any way.

(4.) It is worthy of special notice that, in order to the death of Jesus, one of the chosen twelve, those most intimately associated with his life, *betrayed* him, and guided the persons sent to arrest him. By this means his arrest was private, and the advantage gained by his enemies of an accusation made and condemnation procured before an opportunity was given his friends to do anything in his behalf. But why did one who discerned the thoughts of

men have a traitor among the intimate associates of his life?

Because the very plan and purpose of his life included his betrayal and his death.

According to the purpose of God and the plan of his life, from the persistent, malicious hatred of leading influential Jews, by the betrayal of Judas, and by the condemnation of the Roman governor, without cause and contrary to justice, Jesus was put to death on the cross. But this was not the end of his course on earth.

(5.) He *rose from the dead* on the third day from his crucifixion. According to his own saying, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again," he came forth from the tomb and showed himself alive to his disciples. He appeared to them on different occasions and in various ways, sometimes to one, two, or three, sometimes to the eleven, sometimes to a larger number. He pointed them to the marks of his crucifixion in his hands and feet and body. He ate with them, and talked with them. Some of them were slow to believe that he had

risen; but he removed all their doubts. It does not appear that he had the eleven with him so constantly as before he was crucified. But he was with them frequently during forty days, and gave them particular instructions, charging them, with special emphasis, to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, assuring them also that he would be with them unto the end of the world.

And finally, on Mt. Olivet, in the midst of the assembled disciples, directing them to wait in Jerusalem for a special baptism of the Holy Ghost, and giving them the promise, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth;" then, "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Thus was finished the course on earth of him who claimed to set up the kingdom of God on earth and to be its King. And the conclu-

sion is most appropriate, whatever may be thought of the history.

Is this wonderful narrative, of which I have given a very imperfect outline, entirely a fiction? This is not pretended by the learned and able men who reject all that is supernatural, miraculous, and a special revelation from God. They admit that a good, wise, and very extraordinary man named Jesus lived in Judea at the period of this history. But they assume that there never was, and, most of them, that there never can be such an event as a miracle. Accordingly, they take out, by some device or other, all that is supernatural in the statements which have come to us concerning Jesus Christ. All that is of such a character they ascribe to the skillful contrivance, to the cunning, or the wisdom, or the fertile imagination, of Jesus and his disciples. They suppose that to a basis of facts large additions of fiction have been made; and so have come in all the most wonderful things in the New Testament. Is this a reasonable way to treat the four narratives which are called the Gospels?

Is it so reasonable as to take them for honest and true statements of facts?

One thing is certain. There is presented in the gospel history a very wonderful character, such as the world has never seen beside. He was a man without any taint of earthly corruption, and free from the common weaknesses of humanity. He was a teacher of singular purity, simplicity, wisdom, force and authority. He reproved the wickedness of the world. He gave glory to God. He did good to men. Was he not then in truth the messenger of God? Was he not the Saviour whom God sent to save men from their sins? Ought we not all to receive him as our Saviour and our Lord?

"His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
For evermore adored,
The Wonderful, the Counselor,
The great and mighty Lord."

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST AS A TEACHER.

"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." — Luke iv. 22.

THIS was at Nazareth, where Jesus had been brought up. It was in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He was accustomed, it seems from the narrative, to take an active part in the synagogue worship. He read a passage from the writings of Isaiah, and then made comments on it. The comments are not given, but only the words with which he began: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Then, instead of any further report of what he said, we have the statement, "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." This shows that what he said awakened interest,

and made a most favorable impression. It drew forth the admiration of those who heard him.

By gracious words we must understand, I think, words of kindness, which seemed richly laden with blessings to the hearers.

The passage indicates in some degree the character of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the peculiar excellence of those teachings is the subject for our present consideration. If I do not quite mistake, they are such as to show that he was a divine teacher; that God was with him, authorizing the instructions he gave; and that we ought to receive his teachings as really and truly from God. I do not suppose that any one quality of these teachings will show that they are certainly divine; but I do suppose that the various qualities combined will show it beyond any reasonable question.

1. The PURITY OF CHRIST'S TEACHINGS is the first thing that I suggest for consideration. It is a very remarkable fact that the teachings ascribed to him in the New Testament history

are generally acknowledged to be the purest the world has known. Believer and unbeliever alike admits this. Scarcely can there be found any one who calls it in question. The difference is, that the believer regards the teachings of Christ as absolutely right, perfect, and of divine authority; while the unbeliever says they are good, excellent, the best the world has known, though they may not be without fault, and are not of divine authority. But by the consent of all writers and thinkers on the subject of morals, so far as I know, there is no pretension that the world has ever learned a purer morality than that which was taught by Jesus Christ. Nor indeed has any been found which bears comparison with it, unless derived from it. Certainly this is the settled opinion of those generally who give attention to such matters. In nothing is there a greater unanimity of judgment throughout the enlightened portions of the world.

This being the fact, it is hardly needful to try to prove that the teachings of Christ surpass all others in their purity. It will be bet-

ter to notice how they so excel. They ascribe the moral character of our actions to the motives, or state of mind, from which we act. He that is angry with his brother, and has no good reason for it, is guilty of murder. He who cherishes lustful desires is guilty of adultery. Jesus fastens on the minds of men the conviction that this must be so, by declaring that God looks into the heart and requires perfect righteousness.

The standard of right which he sets before us is the highest that can be. It is perfect. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself." "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." So high a standard of righteousness, adopted by him as the rule of his teachings, would, of course, if strictly followed, make them entirely right.

Nothing more was needed to secure that excellent purity which is commonly ascribed to the teachings of our Lord than these two things: the tracing of all that is truly right or wrong to the motives or the state of the mind,

and the adoption of the true standard, the law of perfect righteousness. This discerning of motives and measuring of all things by the law of perfect right was made effectual by constantly pointing all men to the throne of the Holy One, reminding them of the judgment he gives. Jesus taught effectually those who heard him that we always have to do with the one Being who looks on the heart and judges righteously. And this was in no small degree the secret of his power.

Since Jesus Christ in his words of truth and power brought the eye of God to look upon the lives of men, and made those who listened to him conscious of being under the omniscient eye, we need not think it strange that no unbeliever, however disposed, has been able to find any impurity in his teachings, or trace any bad influence to them; but they have stood out before the world, through the ages since he was on earth, in the light and glory and purity of divine truth.

2. SYMPATHY WITH THE WANTS AND THE SORROWS OF MEN is another characteristic of

his teachings. When the messengers of John the Baptist came to ask if he was the Messiah, he said, "The poor have the gospel preached to them." He always showed compassion for the poor. His heart was full of sympathy for the suffering. Both in his works and in his words he gave them consolation.

In the passage from which the words at the beginning of this chapter are taken, we are told that he read from the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And when he closed the book and sat down and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," he went on to speak according to the portion of Scripture which he had read. And it was this speaking in agreement with that remarkable passage, which awakened the wonder of all at his gracious words. Nothing could show more

plainly his sympathy with the afflicted. The prophecy, which he applied to himself, declared this expressly. And if we turn to the prophet, and notice what follows the portion read, the whole passage appears still more remarkable. It is this: "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness; the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

After we find such a prophecy claimed as belonging to Christ, we may well expect to find him pronouncing peculiar blessings on the poor in spirit, on those who mourn, on the meek, on the pure in heart, and on such as are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. It seems a matter of course that we should see him everywhere having sympathy with the sorrowing. Most of his miracles were wrought in behalf of those who were suffering from dis-

ease or some bodily privation. Toward those who were despised by their fellow-men he manifested special kindness. He talked with the woman of Samaria by Jacob's well, though she was not the most respectable character, till she saw that he knew her life, and came to believe in him as the Christ, and to drink of the living water which he only could give. To the woman caught in adultery, whom his enemies brought to him, he spoke in kindness, when he told her to go and sin no more. Compassion toward the poor and toward the sinful was very prominent in his teachings, as it has always been a prominent part of his influence in the world.

His chosen friends were not the wealthy, or those in high social positions. He could be indeed the guest of a rich man, like Zaccheus, carrying salvation to his house. But Zaccheus was despised by the Jews because he was a publican. And those whom Jesus brought nearest to him were Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene, and the fishermen of Galilee. It is worthy of special notice

that one of the most correct and faultless of all those who proposed to become his disciples, having great possessions, was required to sell all that he had and give the proceeds to the poor, and could not otherwise be received as a disciple. Thus alike by precept and example did he show himself the special friend of the poor.

3. The SIMPLICITY OF HIS TEACHINGS is worthy of particular notice. He spoke very plainly, and he illustrated his thoughts familiarly, so as to interest all who heard him. The common people heard him gladly. This was partly, no doubt, because he made them feel that he was their friend, but also partly because he made them understand many things which he said to them, which they had not known before. His parables, such as the good Samaritan, the publican and the Pharisee, the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the tares and the wheat, are so familiar to us that we do not think how peculiarly instructive, impressive, and full of significance they are. The like of them are not to be found, for influence upon the

minds of all people, in all the other literature of the world. Simplicity has always been reckoned a remarkable characteristic of his teachings.

4. But there was also a wonderful MYSTERY in them. This is quite as marked as the simplicity with which he spoke. Oftentimes he seems to have spoken designedly so that his meaning could not be fully understood, even by his best friends. He awakened the wonder, but did not satisfy the inquiries of those who heard him. In repeated instances his words were more for instruction afterward than at the time they were spoken. When he said, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, — it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," there was something mysterious in his words. His meaning did not plainly appear.

And the mystery is greater in these sayings: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; . . . for my flesh is meat in-

deed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." These expressions, and all like them, were dark to the disciples, and to all who heard him. And when later he declared, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," it also was a dark saying. Afterward his meaning in this instance was plain enough, but then it was a great mystery. So when he called himself a king, but avoided even every appearance of assuming authority in the affairs of state, it was hard for those who trusted and followed him to understand the meaning of his words and actions.

There are some portions of his teachings on which the mystery still remains in no small degree. Such, it seems to me, are those predictions in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, about the destruction of Jerusalem, which also, from the strength and breadth of the language used, seem to foretell the end of the world. Is there not likewise a mystery too deep for us to explain in what he says about his union with the Father? Who can tell ex-

actly in what sense he is one with the Father, as he said, while it is also true that he said, "My Father is greater than I"?

Many things he spoke very plainly; and still, over many of his sayings is the darkness of mystery.

5. There is a NEGATIVE, OR AN OMISSION, in our Saviour's teachings worthy of special notice. There is in them *no confession of sin.* There is not expressed or apparent any consciousness of sin. The whole manner, tone, and language of the Great Teacher is as if he had no thought of sin as belonging to himself, while he is always charging it on all men in all the world beside.

There is, indeed, no boasting of freedom from sin, no declaration of innocence, such as we often hear from men in the world. Men very often proclaim their own righteousness. He does not this. He speaks as if he had no need to make confession, or to say that he was not a sinner. And yet he speaks of himself much, and of sin much, but always as if he had no concern with it in himself, though he had

great concern with it in others. He says, "I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to be the Saviour of sinners. He speaks of himself as if he personally had no part nor lot in sin, nor in any of the evils which belong to it. And yet in all the accounts of him it is kept before us that he came into the world to save sinners, and that his kingdom is a kingdom of salvation from sin.

This, truly, is a wonderful singularity in Jesus Christ as a teacher. In this respect he stands entirely apart from all other men. All teachers beside make acknowledgment of their sins and imperfections ; or, if they do not, they seem to be ignorant of themselves, and often show the sins which they do not confess. But he stands alone as having not the taint of sin upon him, according to his own view, and according to the whole history; yet calling sinners to turn from their sins and be saved in his kingdom. His work is not to save himself, but to save others. "The Son of man came

not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Men are sinners, and need a Saviour. He came to be their Saviour. For this he does not become a sinner, but he lays down his life for sinners.

It was to his disciples one of the mysteries of his teachings, that he was to be put to death, that he was going to lay down his life and take it again. He was not compelled by the power of man to give up his life, as good men in this wicked world often have been. His enemies thought he was, and thought they prevailed against him. But not so did he teach. He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

Thus the sinless died for the sinful. This is according to the record of the gospel histories. And such is the account given of him that there seems nothing unnatural in regarding him as sinless, while he declared that he laid down his life for sinners.

6. The teachings of Christ are marked by a

VERY SINGULAR CONCERN FOR SINNERS. This is shown by the declarations just now quoted, — that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners; and to seek and to save that which was lost. To the same purpose is the parable of the lost sheep, and that of the lost piece of silver, with the instruction drawn from them, — "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

This is very singular language, however it may be understood. If it be taken in the exactly literal sense, the repentance of one sinner gives greater joy to God and his angels in heaven than would be given by ninety-nine persons who had never sinned. It shows a very wonderful interest in sinners. The repentance and the salvation of sinners, it would then seem, is a matter of intense concern to the inhabitants of heaven, even above the virtue and righteousness of those who have not sinned.

Or, if the language be understood to mean

that the repentance of one sinner, known and acknowledged to be very wicked, gives greater joy in heaven than do ninety and nine persons who are of respectable character and not charged with special wickedness, the instruction is the same. Christ expressly teaches in this way that God and his angels are especially interested in the repentance and salvation of sinners.

The same thing is shown by the manner in which he speaks of publicans and sinners, and by his treatment of them. He spoke of them in a more hopeful way than of the Pharisees, who were, in the general estimation, the more respectable class of people. And he treated them with greater attention. He seems never to have despaired of men on account of their degradation in wickedness, while he did sometimes speak as if there could be no hope of those, however esteemed in the world, who were proudly self-satisfied in their sins. He said to the Pharisees, in substance, — Publicans and sinners are pressing into the kingdom of God before you. This he taught very plainly

by the different prayers which he set forth as addressed to God by a publican and a Pharisee, showing plainly that the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," must be accepted, and the other must be rejected.

Many Christians have not learned to be careful for sinners, as Jesus was and taught that we should be, when they are low, despised, and miserable. We can pity the poor when they are virtuous; but for the poor when they are vicious we have too little compassion. The more we have of his spirit, the more we shall learn to be like him in this matter. The more shall we learn to be concerned for the good of those whom the world despises as worthless, or hates as worse than worthless.

7. He taught that WE SHOULD LOVE OUR ENEMIES. This is another peculiarity of his teachings. It was a precept of heathen morality, "Be not surpassed by your friends in doing them benefits, nor by your enemies in doing them injuries." Very different was the precept of our Lord in relation to our enemies. He said, "Love your enemies, do good to them

that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."

To this high grandeur of goodness does he call his disciples, and teach them to be, in this way, like their Father in heaven, as he, in his manhood, was like God. This is so unlike the best moral precepts of men without the Bible that we may well call it a divine element in the instruction of the Great Teacher.

8. Jesus Christ as a teacher shows A DIVINE MASTERSHIP. He was the Master and Lord of the disciples. He was far more their superior than any one man is the superior of another. The difference between him and them, between him and all men to whom he spoke, was so wide that there is nothing like it in the relations of other teachers to their disciples. The wise men of the world often draw around them friends a little less wise than they, with whom they talk in pleasant and familiar conversation. The wiser, who may be regarded as the teacher, doubtless imparts to the others more knowledge, more wisdom, more truth,

than he receives from them. But he receives, also, as well as gives. He is only first among those who in many things are his equals.

But Jesus stood among his disciples as the light shining in darkness. He was the true Light which lighteth every man. He was their Lord and their Master. They gave him homage. They were obedient to him. They received his words as spoken by one who had indeed a right to be heard and obeyed. He spoke with authority and power, overawing his enemies, silencing their cavils, convincing them of sin, leaving them without excuse if they would not repent and believe in him ; and blessing his friends with peace and hope, with joyful confidence in him, and in his promise of everlasting life. "Ye call me Lord and Master," he said ; "and ye do well." They could not do otherwise : they felt him to be their Lord and Master.

But he taught by his actions, as well as by his words. He washed their feet, doing the work of a servant for them, that he might impress on their minds the lesson of doing ser-

vice one to another. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

So did he condescend to do service to the disciples for their instruction and benefit. But he lost not one whit of his superiority in so doing. Nor did he, when he submitted to the suffering of the cross. Before Pilate he was a king. And after his resurrection, in his treatment of his disciples, in the commission he gave them to preach the gospel in all the world, and his promise to be with them always, he still showed his divine authority and power as their Master and Lord.

Now, it must be remembered that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and to speak with the approbation and authority of God. If his claim is good, we have a revelation from God by him. Are his peculiar characteristics as a teacher consistent with this claim? Do they confirm it as far as they go? We have seen that they are marked by singular purity,

as even unbelievers declare, by sympathy with the wants and sorrows of men, by great simplicity and plainness in many things, by a strange mystery also in many things, by a peculiar care for sinners, even the worst, by enjoining love to enemies, and by a divine mastership. He speaks and acts as one who really had the authority and the power of God.

Can it be that such a teacher was an impostor, pretending that God was with him, and deceiving the people? Truly, the purity of his teachings, and the reverence for God which marks them everywhere, make the supposition altogether unreasonable. Or can it be that he was an enthusiast, who imagined himself to be the messenger of God and speaking with God's authority, when he was not? This supposition is equally unreasonable. The purity of his teachings, their adaptation to human wants, and their wise plainness, are quite inconsistent with his being a weak man, who imagined himself specially commissioned of God contrary to the fact.

The reasonable conclusion is that God has

spoken to us by Jesus Christ. Then indeed God says to us, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." We should hear him when he says that he came to call sinners to repentance. We should hear him when he says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus Christ came indeed as a teacher, the Great Teacher, of higher authority and higher worth than all others. But he came not as a teacher only. He is a Saviour also, the one only Saviour for sinful men. So he teaches, when he calls on men everywhere to trust in him and receive the promise of salvation. And how glorious the promise he gives to them who believe on him; how solemn the warning to them who do not believe! "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."

CHAPTER VII.

MIRACLES.

"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." — John iii. 2.

THIS you will recognize as the address of Nicodemus, when he came to Jesus by night. The miracles, which were well known and could not be denied, seemed to this candid ruler of the Jews certain proof that the teacher who was endowed with power to do such wonders came with a commission from God. And men have generally been of the same opinion, when they have believed the miracles to be real.

But many have called in question the reality of miracles, and even the possibility of them. And in considering the evidences of Christianity we must meet this question. In order to meet it, let us see, —

1. WHAT IS A MIRACLE? What sort of events are called miracles in the Bible, and in all the proper use of language? Various definitions have been given. I can think of none better than this. A miracle is an event so far above the course of nature and the power of man that we reasonably ascribe it to the direct and extraordinary action of God, and can not reasonably refer it to any other cause. It is an act of God so direct and extraordinary that his agency in it is manifest, and can not be reasonably denied. It is not merely a wonderful and startling event, which we can not explain. Such an event might be ascribed to some natural cause, which we do not see, but may learn hereafter; or it might be brought about by some extraordinary power of man, which we have not yet known; or it might be effected by some other power less than God. There are doubtless powers of nature operating in the world which no man has found out. And men have sometimes attained to most surprising skill in the use of their faculties of body and mind, so that they are able to do things

which are very strange and mysterious to other men. And we certainly do not know but there are beings having some agency in this world, who are superior to men but inferior to God. We may suppose there are such beings, and that they can do things which we can not do.

I have intended, by the definition I have given of a miracle, to shut out all events which it can be reasonably supposed are produced by any of these three causes or all of them. Plainly, anything which can be produced by any or all of these three causes, the unknown forces of nature, the extraordinary powers of man, or the agency of other beings than God, — anything so produced is no proof of God's special presence, no revelation of his authority and power. The real miracles, events which prove that God speaks to us, must be such as can not be reasonably ascribed to any other cause than God. They must be such as show that God is with the person at whose word they take place.

The miracles wrought by Christ are of this

character. Said Nicodemus, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And when Jesus said to a man brought to him helpless with palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house," and the man did as he was told; when he gave sight to one well known to be blind by a word, or by putting clay on his eyes; and when the sick, and even the dead, at his command arose in health, was not the conclusion of Nicodemus reasonable? Could he reasonably form any other opinion?

But there are those, and some of them are men of great learning, who deny that there can be a miracle. Some say that a miracle can not be; and some say that if it can be, it can not be proved by any testimony. And they give scientific reasons, according to their views of science, against the belief of any such events.

2. Let these questions then be the second topic for our consideration: CAN THERE BE A MIRACLE? CAN IT BE PROVED BY TESTIMONY?

Those who deny that there can be a miracle

argue in this way: "It is contrary to the course of nature for a miracle to take place. But the course of nature is fixed and can not be changed. Physical science settles the matter. The causes always in operation must always produce the same effects. Therefore such an event as a miracle, deranging the course of nature, violating the law of cause and effect, can not be." This is a brief statement of the argument against the possibility of miracles.

Some skeptics, more cautious, do not so much argue against the possibility of miracles as against the possibility of proving them. "All our knowledge," it is said, "depends on experience. We receive the evidence of testimony, because we have learned by experience that men tell the truth. But we have not learned that they uniformly tell the truth. On the contrary, we have learned that in many cases they vary from it, sometimes by mistake, sometimes intentionally. And so we can not have perfect confidence in the testimony of men, even the best. But the uniform experience of all men leads us to have perfect confi-

dence in the course of nature. Therefore it is more reasonable to believe that the witnesses for miracles have, in some way, been deceived, or been led to give false testimony, than to believe that there has been a variation from the course of nature." This is substantially the celebrated argument of Hume. The conclusion is strongly stated in his own words: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm, unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."

It is a fatal objection to all these arguments, that they leave out of view the agency, the power, and even the existence of God. They are essentially atheistic. If there be a God, who has established the course of nature and regulates its operation, he certainly can vary its operation, and can manifest his presence and power in varying its operation. If God exists, the creator and ruler of the world, he can work miracles, and can reveal himself to

men by miracles. He is above the course of nature, a *super*-natural being. He can, therefore, vary or interrupt the ordinary course of nature, that so he may reveal his presence and power and authority. He established and maintains it; and it is absurd to suppose that he shuts himself out from it, or can not show his presence in it, so as to stamp his authority on the instructions which men need and which he gives them.

Man himself, within the narrow limits of his power, is a supernatural being. He can and often does vary the course of nature, or turn it to the purposes which he chooses. He makes a stream of water saw and grind, spin and weave, and do many other things for his advantage. By the application of heat to water he transforms it into steam and makes it propel the ship on the wide ocean, and draw long and heavy trains of cars, freighted with all kinds of property and hundreds of people, over the land. In these and many other ways does man, as a supernatural being, make the laws or powers of nature do him service.

And can not God as the great, the almighty supernatural being, reveal his power over the laws or powers of nature which he has established, and so make known his authority and his goodness to men? To deny that he can, is practically to deny that God exists and governs the world in righteousness and goodness.

This argument, I think, must be conclusive to one who believes in the existence and government of God. To one who denies that God exists and governs the world it can have no force. If human experience or human science is supposed to prove that there is no God, it may just as well be supposed to prove that there can be no such thing as a miracle. And one supposition will be just as reasonable as the other. But if reason demands that we believe God exists, the creator and ruler of all things, it demands also that we believe he may work miracles to show men his power and glory.

The truth is, that our experience is too limited in its range, too small in its extent, to furnish any proof against either of these facts, the ex-

istence of God, or miracles. And it is notoriously the world's experience, that, where the Bible is known, a very large part of the best and wisest men in the world have believed them both.

3. THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE ARE INSEPARABLE AND ESSENTIAL PARTS OF ITS HISTORY AND TEACHINGS. Those relating to Jesus Christ, and those which are said to have been wrought by him, are inseparable and essential parts of his history. Suppose them to be taken away, and you suppose him to be dishonest, false, a pretender and a cheat, not a teacher of truth, nor a doer of righteousness. Or you suppose that his history, as it comes to us, is so overloaded with fables that no one can tell what in it is truth. The appeal is constantly made to them as proof that he taught with the authority of God.

So he himself referred to them. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." "If I had

not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Can any one reasonably doubt that he refers here to his miracles? In his reply to the messengers of John the Baptist, he refers to them expressly. He performed miraculous cures before them, and said, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."

Accordingly, in the words at the head of the chapter, Nicodemus avows himself convinced that Jesus was a teacher come from God by the miracles which he wrought; "for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And the apostles, when their Lord was no longer with them, preached to the unbelieving Jews concerning Jesus of Nazareth: "A man approved of God among you by miracles and signs and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you, as

ye yourselves also know." And in the same way of preaching, Peter declared that God had raised him from the dead after he was crucified.

Thus the miracles appear in the Bible as an essential part of the history, and as supporting the teachings, of Christ and the apostles. They certify God's authority in the Great Teacher, and in his disciples as commissioned by him. Take them away, and you make the Bible history nothing but legendary stories. You deprive all that Christ and the apostles said of divine authority; and much of it you deprive of any respect as a statement of facts. They constantly affirm that they speak as authorized by God, and that the miracles are proof of their commission so to speak. They were strangely deluded men, or they were impostors; or the miracles were truly signs of God's presence and authority with them.

4. We come, therefore, to consider next THE PROOF OF THE MIRACLES. They are proved by all the evidence we have that the gospel history is not a fiction, but is true.

(1.) The first evidence to my mind is in

the appearance of the gospel narratives, as they come to us. There are four separate accounts of the life, works, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They are so unlike as to show that they were written by different men, and that there was no careful agreement between them to avoid every apparent discrepancy. Each one omits some things which are contained in some of the others. And they relate the same things in different aspects, as different writers would naturally do. But all of them have the open face of honesty and truth in what they say. When you look into them you see the frankness, simplicity, straightforwardness, sometimes the minuteness, always the unsuspicious manner, of writers who are making a true statement of facts. This appearance is a strong proof of honesty and truth in a single writer. But when we have four distinct narratives, all bearing the same plain marks of truth, the proof is multiplied. It is more than four times as great, because there is such perfect agreement in the marks of honesty, and not exact agreement in the

manner of the narrative, or the way in which the facts are given. This argument, that the Bible is itself the best proof of its own truth, is so great as to make the general circulation of the Bible the most effectual security against skepticism. Men who are accustomed to read the Bible are not generally apt to deny that God speaks to us in it.

(2.) A second proof of the miracles of the New Testament is the one very strongly set forth by Paley: *the testimony of the apostles and others*, given, at the peril of their lives, against every earthly and selfish reason for it. The miracles were of such a nature that the eye-witnesses of them could not possibly be deceived. The healing of the sick by a word, the giving of sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and the bringing of the dead to life again, and all these openly, before many persons, are such manifestly mighty works, above the course of nature and above the power of man, that eye-witnesses could not be deceived concerning them. They had no motive of advantage to themselves in

this world for giving the testimony they did. They exposed themselves to persecution, and many of them suffered death in cruel forms, because they declared that Jesus Christ wrought those miracles, and was raised from the dead by the power of God. If their testimony was true, and they were authorized and sustained by God in giving it, they had good reason for their course of action. But otherwise their conduct was without reason.

(3.) Another argument for the miracles is found in *the success which attended the preaching of the apostles.* They had no power to offer worldly advantages to those who should believe them. They were themselves objects of persecution, despised, hated, imprisoned, tortured and put to death. And those who believed their declarations concerning Jesus Christ were sure to suffer like evils. Yet many did believe and become so exposed. How was this? How could it be if the testimony they gave had not been the truth?

I conclude, therefore, that their testimony

was the truth, that the miracles of the Bible are not fables, but wonderful works of God.

5. One common OBJECTION to the reality of miracles must be noticed. It is that there have been a great many *pretended miracles*, and a great many wonderful things which we can not explain, though we do not call them miracles. This is certainly true. But pretended miracles are no proof that none are real. On the contrary, they make it probable that some real miracles have been performed. If there never had been any miracles, it is not very probable that any would have been pretended. Certainly, false miracles are not proof that none are true, any more than false coin is proof that none is genuine.

And as to the many wonderful things which we can not explain in the facts of mesmerism, and other facts more or less like them, we have no reason to ascribe them to the direct action of God as evidence of his giving a revelation to the world. They do not appear to come from him for that purpose. They are not shown us as the works of a great teacher from

God, like Jesus Christ, offering them for proof of his commission. So we may set them aside for examination, according to our ability and opportunity, as subjects of curious inquiry. And we should believe concerning them what we find reason to believe.

6. A QUALIFYING REMARK should be made here on the miracles as evidences for Christianity. They do not stand alone, either in fact or according to God's design. They may be considered essential evidences. I think they were essential in the beginning of the Christian religion. But then and now they are most important as confirming other evidences that we have a revelation from God, and especially as confirming the evidences in the life and the character and the teachings of him who came from God.

If the miracles of our Lord and of his disciples stood by themselves, they would have no meaning. And it is their real meaning which gives them their great importance.

7. What then is THE REAL MEANING of the miracles of Christ and his apostles? What

was the design of them? What do they show?

They show that *God was with Jesus Christ*, that his claim to be the Son of God was right, and that he spoke and acted with the authority of God. This he claimed for them when he said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him." On this account he declares that the Jews were condemned for their unbelief. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

The miracles of Christ, then, show that, in speaking to men, he had such authority and knowledge and power as belong only to God.

And the miracles of the disciples show that *they acted with the authority which Christ gave them from God.* They wrought miracles in the name of Christ, referring to him for the source of their power, and the authority of

their teachings. This is so constantly the fact that there seems to be no doubt of their having ascribed all their miraculous power to him as its author. He spoke with the authority of God, testified by miracles. They spoke as they received commission from him, testified by miracles.

The miracles proved the *inspiration* of those who worked them. They could not have known that they were able to work miracles if they had not been inspired of God with the knowledge. Their attempting it with success shows that they had knowledge of the power in them, as well as that they had the power.

If they had not been divinely inspired or impelled, they would not have made the attempt. Or, if they had made the attempt, not so moved, they would have failed. But God made his power and authority known in the gift of miracles for the conviction of the world, and to leave men without excuse if they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

All the practical power of Christianity depends on our belief. Our belief is supported

by evidence. And a very material part of the evidence is in the miracles, the wonderful works of God, showing his presence and authority with those whom he sent to speak for him, and leading men to love and obey him, that they may be saved from sin and death.

Those are fearfully solemn words of our Saviour: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. . . . That the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law: They hated me without a cause."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AUTHORITY CLAIMED AND EXERCISED BY CHRIST.

"For he taught them as one having authority." — Matt. vii. 29.

THIS brief comment follows that wonderful discourse commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. "When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his teachings: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

On a certain occasion men were sent to make him a prisoner; but they returned without him, and showed to those who sent them that he had a power in his words such as no other man ever had. "Why have ye not brought him?" said the chief priests and Pharisees. "Never man spake like this man," replied the officers. That was reason enough.

This reply to men who were baffled in their

designs of violence by his words of power shows that Jesus could defend himself as no other man ever could. His enemies could not resist the wisdom and authority with which he spoke.

In reading the gospel histories we can not fail to notice that Jesus Christ often claimed and exercised very wonderful power. In this respect he took for himself a position above all men living then, and indeed above all who ever lived in the world. The statements concerning this matter are so very singular and wonderful as to deserve careful attention. It seems to me that they may reasonably have much weight in deciding the question, whether he gave us a revelation from God.

We must assume that he was an honest and good man. Those who deny a special revelation by him, and deny even the possibility of miracles, generally admit this. He was, they acknowledge, a man of superior wisdom and goodness. Taking this admission, and taking the narratives as we have them, what are we to conclude from the statements given us of

his claiming and exercising an authority far above that which naturally belongs to any man? Does the authority with which he spoke and acted show, as Nicodemus said of his miracles, that God was with him?

To get a proper answer to these questions, we must look at some of the instances of authority claimed and exercised by him. It appears chiefly in his teachings; yet sometimes it is no less to be seen in his actions.

He did not exercise authority by the command of armies, nor by the use of civil power, as earthly rulers do. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" claiming to be a king, but not to reign as an earthly king.

He TAUGHT with singular authority. This appears generally in the statements made of what he said, and the manner in which he said it. Take the first and longest of his talks on record, the *Sermon on the Mount.* Did any other man ever begin to speak with such an assumption of a perfect right to decide all questions of morals and of wisdom as he does in the Beatitudes? He assumes to speak in

the name of God, and as if there could be no doubt of his right so to speak. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What a strange assertion for any man! How directly in contrast with the practical thoughts and plans and aims of men. But how positively it is spoken, as if the kingdom of heaven were his own. And so it was, according to his usual way of speaking. He was a king, though in so lowly a condition that he had not where to lay his head. He pretended to no authority in the state; but in relation to truth and right, to God and the soul, he spoke as king of a higher kingdom than any on the earth. The highest themes which men have ever studied, he treated, not only as if they were familiar to his knowledge, but as if they were subject to his word and will.

The conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount is an assumption of the most unlimited power and authority. It is nothing less than a claim to be the final Judge. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the

will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

What is this less than claiming to be the final Judge? And that most impressive contrast, which makes the direct application of the discourse, is in the same high tone. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man. . . . And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man." The intervening parts of the sermon are also like the beginning and the end, in the tone of authority.

So it is whenever you find him acting the part of a teacher. Nicodemus, an honorable ruler of the Jews, went to Jesus by night, in order to have some private conversation with him, and acknowledged him as a teacher whom God had sent, from the proof his miracles gave.

Jesus at once spoke to the ruler as if God was indeed with him, and as if no one could doubt the fact. He claimed all that Nicodemus allowed, if not more.

Look then at *the terms of discipleship* which he prescribes. One who would be a disciple of this poor man, hated by the chiefs of the Jewish people, must forsake all his friends, even his father and mother, his brother and sister, his wife and children, — yes, his own life also. Nothing could be withholden. And the language in which he enforced this claim is that of one who had the authority of God. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's and of the holy angels." Did ever any other person, offering himself as a teacher and a leader, assume such authority over all men? He speaks as if the whole world were rightfully now subject to him, and would finally be brought before him for judgment.

In the language of *severity* which our Lord

sometimes uses there is a terrible authority. So did he condemn those places in which he had often wrought miracles and spoken words of truth with little or no effect upon the people. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell."

Notice too with what severity he condemned the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers, certainly the most respectable people of the time and country in which he lived. To one of them in his own house, where Jesus, an invited guest, had sat down to eat without washing, and the Pharisee wondered at his conduct, he said, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is with-

out make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

One of the lawyers objected that he was reproaching them. And he said, "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." And so he goes on with language unparalleled. He told them that the blood of good men slain in all time past would be required of that generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias. He thus told them that they were more wicked than any generation before them. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Would any wise and good man, if not authorized by God, dare to speak as he did?

In some of his *parables* Jesus seems to claim supreme authority. Thus by the parable of the lost sheep, and the like one of the lost piece of silver, he teaches that there is peculiar joy in heaven over one repenting sinner. In the representation he makes of the wise and foolish virgins, he warns men as if the omniscient Judge were speaking by him. He, their Lord, will so surprise them as the foolish virgins were surprised, if they be not on their guard. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." So likewise in the parable of the talents he sets forth the principles of sovereignty and justice by which the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom which he was setting up in the earth, is conducted. And when he paints the picture of the poor, diseased beggar, Lazarus, at the rich man's door, with dogs for his companions and comforters, as they together eat the crumbs that fall from the table of wealth and luxury; and then as he shows us Lazarus reclining on the bosom of Abraham in heaven, and the rich man in the torment of hell calling

for a drop of water to cool his tongue, but denied that relief, refused also the favor of having Lazarus sent to warn his five brothers, that they may not come into that place of torment; — is there not a terrible authority assumed in such a parable?

The *commands* given by Jesus are those of one who had the power of God. By the word of command he wrought his stupendous miracles. To the wind and the sea, when they threatened to overwhelm the ship in which he had been quietly sleeping, and filled his disciples with terror, he commanded, "Peace, be still. And immediately there was a great calm." No wonder that those who saw and felt his power said one to another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

He commanded the evil spirits, and they departed from those afflicted by them. To his friend, who had been dead four days, he said, "Lazarus, come forth;" and he came forth from the tomb. This power of his word in working miracles was so apparent that a

Roman centurion compared it to his own authority over the soldiers under him.

Not unlike this was the authority which he assumed in *explaining and applying the law of God.* Corruptions of God's law in the Old Testament had come into repute among the Jews. Its high tone had been let down, its strength had been weakened. Thus, while the ten commandments were still acknowledged in profession by the Jewish people, their moral power was little felt. But he declared them anew, condemned the popular glosses put upon them to blunt their sharp edge, and showed their full force in their strict spiritual sense. His language is that of one claiming to speak as the divine Lawgiver.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. . . . Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adul-

tery with her already in his heart. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies."

His words are so familiar that they need not be further repeated. It seems by them that he claimed to speak with an authority equal to that which first gave the law. And so he did with regard to the Sabbath. When some Pharisees complained that his disciples did unlawful acts on the Sabbath, and so profaned it, he told them that the priests did service in the temple, and were not blamed, adding, "But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple;" and a little after, "For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."

In like manner he claimed the right to FORGIVE SINS. He did this in such a way as to show so plainly what he meant that he could not be misunderstood. The friends of a man sick with palsy brought him to be healed. But they could not get near to Jesus for the crowd around him. So they went up on the flat roof of the house where he was, broke

away the covering, and let down the sick man before him. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." It was perfectly natural that those who did not believe in him should charge him with blasphemy, as they did, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They had a right to ask this question. Sin is an offense against God, a transgression of his law; and none but he can forgive it. But he replied to their complaint by asking them, "Which is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk"? Both were alike easy to him, and within his right, as he showed them. That they might know, and that all men afterward might know that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, he said to the sick man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house." And he did so. Well might the spectators be amazed, as they were, and give glory to God, saying, "We never saw it on this fashion." They had the proof that

God was with him, and that he made no false claim to the right of forgiving sin.

He also did other things implying, like the forgiveness of sins, the authority of God. He promised his disciples that he would answer their prayers. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Again he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." "In the world ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace."

He tells them to believe in him, as they believe in God. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." He likewise claims to be one with the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." On a different occasion he said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me (that is, on me only), but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me." Once he says expressly what he implies in many instances, "I and my Father are one." Jno. x. 30. With-

out pretending here to say exactly what he means by this oneness with the Father, I refer to it as showing the high authority which Jesus claims for himself.

And this claim has another illustration in what he says of the Spirit, the Comforter. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Jno. xv. 26. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Jno. xvi. 7. "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." Jno. xvi. 14, 15.

Who is this that so speaks of himself? We may not be able to explain exactly, or even to see clearly, all that he means by his words. But certainly he means to claim that there is entire agreement between him and the Father; that he does that which the Father approves, the work which the Father has given him to do,

and no other. Certainly he means to declare that he speaks the will of God, with the approbation and authority of God.

There is one other exalted claim that he makes, which I have reserved to speak of last, though indeed it has already been mentioned. HE REPRESENTS HIMSELF TO BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF THE WORLD. He does this more than once. But there is one instance in which it is so clearly marked, the claim is so strongly made, and so undeniable, that I will here specially refer to it alone. It is in the well-known representation of the judgment, the most extended in the Bible, contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. There the Son of man is the Judge. "He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; and he shall sit on the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." He is the King who will say to one class, "Come, ye blessed," and to another, "Depart, ye cursed." Thus

does Jesus Christ claim to be the final Judge of the world.

I have now set before you some instances of the authority claimed and exercised by him whom we call our Lord Jesus Christ, while he was on earth, according to the accounts given us in the four gospel histories. I have only selected here and there some examples. I could not do more. I could not present the subject in its fullness, as it will appear to one who looks into the New Testament for all there is relating to it. But instances have been mentioned of his claiming high authority in the Sermon on the Mount, in his conditions of discipleship, in his denunciations of wicked men respectable in the world, in his commands of miraculous power, and of moral obligation equaling the law of God, in his forgiveness of sins, in his promise of the Spirit, who would show the truth concerning him more clearly than it had been seen, in his claim to be one with the Father, and in his assurance that he will be the final Judge of all.

And what are we to learn from this frequent

claim and exercise of authority, higher than the greatest of men besides Jesus Christ ever thought of possessing? Does it show that he has given us a revelation from God? Does it show that he truly spoke with the authority of God? If the four Gospels are fictions, it does not. If they are an accumulation of fabulous stories overlying the true history of an honest, wise, good man, who was only a man in advance of his own age, then God does not speak to us by Jesus Christ any more truly than by other honest, wise, good men.

But if all the representations of a divine authority in Jesus of Nazareth, and of his own divine assurance, are fabulous, what is left of him? What knowledge have we concerning him? Especially must we ask, How can he have been an honest, wise, good man, most eminent as a teacher of truth and doer of good?

And then how has it come to pass that Christianity has existed in the world, and been the greatest power for good among men? Take away from Jesus all that men have supposed to be divine in him, divine character,

divine authority, divine revelation, and he will be shorn at once of his power. Do, then, fables and false pretensions, when they are reported, so live and work righteousness among all nations? And does the true history lose all its power so soon as the false and fabulous is removed from it? Besides, his claims of divine authority enter into his teachings generally. It is impossible to separate them from the substance of his instructions. They are so interwoven as to belong to the very texture of all that is recorded of his words.

But if the gospel history be substantially true, God has spoken to us by Jesus Christ his Son. And then the message of salvation has come to us by him. To us sinners he has spoken in tones of kindness, in words of love and power, the like of which were never spoken to men by any other. And we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which he has spoken. For how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

Whither shall we go for hope if we turn away from Jesus Christ? In whom can we

trust if we do not receive him? And how can we meet him as our Judge, whom we do not acknowledge and love as our Saviour?

There is a judgment before us; and Jesus Christ is to be our Judge. How can we be prepared to stand before him, if we do not receive him as our Redeemer and our Lord?

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF CHRIST.

"Truly this man was the Son of God." — Mark xv. 39.

JESUS CHRIST, as he is presented to us in the New Testament, is the best evidence of Christianity. If men can be brought to look at him, with all there is about him like other men, showing that he is one with them, and with all there is in him unlike other men, showing that he is incomparably superior to them, they will, it seems to me, find the most conclusive proof that he was the Son of God in a higher sense than any other man; that he gave us a revelation of God's will, and that we ought to believe in him. It is from this belief that I have made Jesus Christ, with his works and his teachings, my subject several times in these chapters on the evidences of Christianity. He who gives the name to

our religion furnishes the most prominent and obvious proof of its divine character and authority. I shall therefore ask your attention further to some things in relation to him. And I propose now the consideration of his sufferings and death, as going to prove the truth and divine character of the religion he gives us.

The accounts which we have in the gospel histories of Christ's sufferings and death are such as we can not reasonably believe to be the inventions of fiction, foisted into the true story of his life; and they are such as go far to prove that he was truly the Son of God, as no other man ever was. Let us look at some important things in relation to the matter, and see if it is not so.

1. HE FORETOLD HIS DEATH in various ways and many times. From the time when he said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up," to the time, just before he was betrayed, when he instituted the Supper in remembrance of his death, he was frequently

referring to the fact that he was to die. Sometimes he gave only brief hints of it. Thus he said, after Mary had anointed his feet with precious ointment, "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this." Sometimes he signified the same thing in forms of expression that were very mysterious to those who heard him, as in those passages where he speaks of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, as the only way to eternal life.

He declared also in repeated instances that he was going to suffer and die. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Here is a plain declaration beforehand of his death, of its being voluntary on his part, and also of his resurrection. As the time for him to suffer and die drew near, he spoke of it to his disciples more frequently and directly. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go up to Jerusalem, and suffer many

things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." They were so fully persuaded that he was going to set up a kingdom that they would not at first understand his plain words. Peter said, "Be it far from thee." But he was rebuked most severely. "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offense unto me. Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

Perhaps the most impressive of all his predictions of his death was by the institution of the memorial supper, to be observed in remembrance of it. There is nothing more solemn in all the religious observances of men than this ordinance of the Christian church. And this most solemn observance is, in every instance, a memorial which he appointed, while yet living, to be kept for ever in remembrance of his death.

All his references to his sufferings and death show that they entered into the plan of his life. They belonged to the very purpose for which he lived. It was not merely incidental to his

life that he should suffer and die, as it is to the life of all men, but it was essential, so that his life would not have accomplished its object if he had not submitted himself to the most extraordinary sufferings and death. He must lay down his life for the sheep. And he must be lifted up from the earth, that he might draw men to him.

2. THE AGONY OF GETHSEMANE is one of the great mysteries in the life of Christ. What was it? And what caused it? The plans of his enemies for getting him into their hands, so that they might destroy him, were becoming matured. The traitor had gone to confer with them and carry out the part of the malicious work to which he had sold himself. Jesus knew all about it. He saw fully what was going to be done. He was free to go where he pleased, and do what he pleased. There was nothing to cause bodily suffering. Plainly, that mysterious anguish was not bodily suffering, but agony of mind. It could not be anything else. And why was there such intense

agony of mind? What caused such severe and overpowering distress?

Was it from fear of the cross? This we can not suppose. Other men have had before them the prospect of death in forms as terrible, and have not been so overcome. If he had been a good man ignorant of what was before him, he could not have suffered so from dread. If he had been only a good man knowing the plots and foreseeing the success of his enemies, he would not have been so overcome with horror at the prospect, unless he had been more deficient in fortitude, and so weaker than many a soldier and many a philosopher and many of his own disciples. What then was the cause?

Is the whole story of this extreme agony a fiction? If so, why was it invented? To what purpose was it, according to any human calculation? Would any man, seeking to exalt the character and work of a leader and teacher whom he admired, of a hero whom he desired to honor, have told of such agony if it was not real? Surely, as a fiction, it is a more un-

natural and improbable thing than ever was invented. If such a fiction had been invented, it never could have been believed as a fact.

And taking it for a fact, it is a great mystery, to be received as part of Christ's work in revealing God's truth and love, and providing salvation for sinful men. The very strangeness of the account given us concerning the agony of Gethsemane argues strongly for its truth, because no fiction-maker could imagine and report such things.

There is some explanation of the mystery when we come to the belief that Jesus suffered for the sins of men; but I can not imagine any explanation of the account as a fiction or an interpolation.

3. His BETRAYAL by one of the twelve, his chosen disciples, is a very noticeable fact in relation to his sufferings and death. It is not a thing without parallel for a good man to be deceived and betrayed by one whom he has trusted and benefited as a friend. This is one of the forms of depravity with which the world is too familiar. But in the case of Jesus the

betrayal was peculiar. According to the narrative there was no deception; for the Master knew, from the first, the character of his false disciple. He chose and kept that disciple with the knowledge of his falsehood and his future treachery. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And when the time came, the traitor executed the wickedness which beforehand his Master knew that he would do. Was there ever a fiction like it?

4. THE CONDEMNATION of Christ was in a manner so peculiar as to deserve special notice. He was a Jew. By descent, and by the country in which he was born and lived, he belonged to that peculiar people. And in all his life he did not go much beyond them with his wonderful works and his words of wisdom. He did indeed heal the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman. She in her distress besought him with earnest faith and humility, accepting even the appellation of "a dog," frequently applied to all who were not of the chosen nation. She begged only for such favor as men allow the dogs, which eat the

crumbs falling from their master's table. And he healed the servant of a Roman centurion entreating with like wonderful faith the healing power of Jesus, who could command disease as perfectly as he himself could command a soldier.

But his ministry was among the Jews. His disciples were of the Jews. And there was little appearance during his lifetime that his influence was extending beyond that people. His enemies, too, were of the Jews. He exposed the corruptions of their priests and learned, influential characters. They were disturbed by his condemnation of their wickedness, and by his proofs that God was with him. Therefore they determined to destroy him. But the Jews were a subject people, and had not power to put a man to death. They could arraign him, according to their law, and declare him worthy of death; but they could not execute their sentence of condemnation. For this they must procure the action of the Roman governor. They had condemned Jesus for blasphemy, according to their law, though

without proof of the crime, and against the proof of his perfect faithfulness to God. He a blasphemer! He taught men to worship God in spirit and in truth. But he claimed to be the Son of God. Therefore the unbelieving Jews declared him to be a blasphemer. Yet they could not put him to death on that charge; for the Roman governor only could issue the sentence of death, and that crime against the Jewish law was nothing to him. Therefore another charge was brought against him before Pilate. He had professed to set up a kingdom. Not by human might nor any worldly power, not with armies nor political schemes, but as a teacher of truth and righteousness, with the laying down of his own life, he established the kingdom of God among men; and he avowed himself its king. His enemies, turning his words from their true meaning, accused him of making himself a king contrary to the Roman authority. Pilate was satisfied that the accusation had no grounds of truth; for he said that he found nothing against him. But their importunity was so urgent, and he was so

weak, that he condemned Jesus to be crucified. Thus he suffered by a Roman method of punishment, against the declared judgment of the Roman governor, according to the demand of Jewish enemies, whose special complaint was that he claimed to be the Son of God. It was a strange combination of circumstances by which he was brought to such a death.

5. His execution on the cross deserves notice. It was a manner of death most impressive and affecting. None could be more adapted to attract the attention of the world in all time. But if the Jews had been an independent nation, Jesus would not have been crucified. He was put to death on the cross, after the manner of the Romans, by Roman authority, and contrary to Roman justice. The officers of that world-wide empire were the actors in the crucifixion of him who came and suffered to procure a world-wide salvation for men, if he was the Son of God, as he claimed to be. And if he was not the Son of God, he was only one of the many impostors who have deceived the world. Then Pilate was not justi-

fied in his execution; but he deserved to die, because he was, as the Jews declared, a deceiver and blasphemer.

Was this the fact? Was the malicious accusation of his enemies true?

There were, according to the narratives, circumstances marking his death as very wonderful. There was darkness over the land for three hours; then an earthquake and a rending of the rocks; and the veil of the temple, which hid the most holy place from the sight of all worshipers, was torn from top to bottom.

> "All nature shakes,
> And earth's strong pillars bend,
> The temple's veil in sunder breaks,
> The solid marbles rend."

Could such events have been reported at the time, if they had not occurred? Or could they have been pretended afterward, if they were not known at the time as facts?

It was when he expired on the cross, with such attending circumstances, that the centurion uttered the words, "Truly this was the Son of God."

6. In the near approach of death JESUS DID NOT EXPRESS THE JOYFUL TRIUMPH which others often have expressed. Compare him in this respect with many of his disciples, and if we are to regard him simply as a good man dying in the course of duty by the power of wicked men, he does not exhibit so much fortitude or divine support as they do. Take Paul for an example. Hear his words of exultation as he saw death approaching. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." In him whom Paul rejoiced to acknowledge as his Lord we find nothing of this kind. We find only uncomplaining submission, entire resignation to suffering the most intense, and no expression of triumph.

If we regard the agony of the garden as

caused by anticipation of the sufferings of the cross so soon to follow, we find the appearance of an overwhelmed and crushed spirit, of a sufferer so prostrated as to be only able to express submission and withhold complaint; nothing more. "Not my will, but thine be done." Or if the agony of the garden is to be considered as apart from the suffering of the cross, a mental anguish by itself, it is then a mystery, and such an inexplicable story of suffering as no writer of fiction would ever have invented.

What writer of fiction would not have made his hero triumphant in death? Especially when that hero claimed to be more than a man; to be the well beloved Son of God, the revealer of God to men, and when he told his disciples more than once that they must be ready to lay down their lives for his sake,—would not any writer of fiction, or any one who added fictitious parts to the true history, have represented him as dying in joyous and glorious triumph? The early Christians were many of them so represented. And so have been those

in later times. Why was not their master and leader? Certainly, Christian writers would have so represented him, if they had invented the story of his death, or if they had added to the true history, according to their own natural wishes and imagination.

Supposing that Jesus had been like any other man, only superior, greatly superior even, in wisdom and goodness, and supposing his followers, after he was put to death, wished to exalt him as highly as possible, and so they contrived additions to the plain facts of his life, that he might appear to be in very truth the Holy One of God, declaring the will of God, and showing to men how they might, by becoming his followers, be sure of God's favor;— would they have made the history of his sufferings and death such as it is? We can imagine them saying he told them beforehand that he was going to suffer and to die. But is it possible that they should have invented the agony of Gethsemane to honor their Master? And is it possible that they would set him out before the world as having foretold his own suf-

fering and death, and as having warned them, too, that they should not fear suffering and death in his service; and yet as being so overwhelmed, crushed, and utterly broken down in spirit, as he was in the garden, and afterward never gaining fortitude and strength enough to triumph, as his followers since have triumphed, in the worst forms of death?

The supposition is to me absurd. The history of Christ's sufferings and death is true, or it never could have been given as it is. It is not such a history as any man's imagination would have conceived. And the strangest things in it are such as men would never have put into it, according to their own conceptions of what is proper, natural, and right.

And if this history be true, the sufferings and death of Christ are really very wonderful. He was wonderful as the revealer of God to the world and the Saviour of sinners. And his sufferings and death were among the most wonderful things relating to him. We are interested in them because they were for us. He died for our sins. He suffered, the just for

the unjust. God laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

In this view of the matter, the true view to the Christian, the sufferings and the death of Christ are of the highest practical importance. They take hold on the hearts of men. They are the strongest expression of God's love. God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son. Christ so loved us that he laid down his life for us. This is the very essence of the gospel. It brings God's love into view, and makes him stand before us, so reaching out with his heart to us and taking hold on our hearts, that no other love can be compared with it. The sufferings and the death of Christ declare the love of God to sinful men. The agony of the garden and the torture of the cross are the voice of God's love, saying, "Look unto me, and be saved. Come unto me, and have life. Trust in me, and receive my love into your heart, and you shall be blessed

for ever. Turn from your sins and receive pardon. Renounce them altogether and give me your heart, and I will give you my everlasting love."

So speak to all the sufferings and the death of Christ, as the message goes forth to be reported and repeated, and sent abroad, and proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Jesus Christ died for our sins; therefore repent and believe in him, and you shall have everlasting life.

And will you not listen? Shall the message come in vain to your ears? Is your heart so hardened against Christ's dying love, that for you he died in vain? Then is there no more sacrifice for your sin, and no more hope for your soul.

"Sinners, turn! why will ye die?
God, your Maker, asks you why.
God, who did your being give,
Made you with himself to live,—
He the fatal cause demands,
Asks the work of his own hands.
Why, O thankless creatures! why
Will ye spurn his love and die?

Sinners, turn! why will ye die?
God, your Saviour, asks you why:
He who his own life did give,
That ye might for ever live.
Will ye let him die in vain,
Crucify your Lord again?
Why, O ransomed sinners, why
Will ye slight his grace and die?"

CHAPTER X.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

"He is not here; he is risen, as he said." — Matt. xxviii. 6.

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ was declared in these words for the first time. Was the declaration true? If so, it proves his divine mission and his divine authority. This miracle admitted, there can be no valid objection to others; and the whole history of Jesus, of his teachings, miracles, sufferings, and death, must consequently be received.

But, if he did not rise from the dead, Christianity is false. Every other miracle can be denied or explained away as easily as this. It must be admitted, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, that his claims to be a divine teacher are without reason. Then his moral teachings

have no peculiar authority. They are like the words of any other moral teacher.

The question, Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? is then of the highest importance as related to the evidences of Christianity. It should therefore receive a very careful consideration. Let us look at some things which may help us to decide what is true in relation to it.

1. THE DISCIPLES DID NOT EXPECT THEIR MASTER WOULD RISE FROM THE DEAD. This is very surprising to us in our common reading of the Bible; and yet certainly it is the fact. He told them plainly, more than once, that he should be put to death, and should rise again. And it is marvelous that, while they had entire confidence in him, they should not have received his words in their plain meaning. Yet certainly they did not. They could not believe that he was to die. And of course they had no idea of his meaning when he spoke of rising from the dead. Once, when he had spoken of being put to death and raised again, Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord;

this shall not be unto thee." But he severely rebuked Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." On another occasion the disciples questioned "one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." They thought and inquired one of another about it, but did not understand it.

Accordingly, they were taken by surprise when he rose, and were not prepared at once to receive the fact. The report which the woman brought who went first to the sepulcher seemed wonderful and incredible. And not until they had themselves seen him, and he had talked with them, were they convinced of the truth. Two of them, as they were walking to the village Emmaus, talking of his death, and of the story that he had risen, found a man walking with them, whom they did not know. He inquired what troubled them; and they told him of the strange events of the three days before, and that certain women of their friends on that morning, being early at

the sepulcher, told of not finding the body of Jesus, and of seeing angels, who said that he had risen from the dead. And though he talked to them with such wondrous wisdom, and so showed them what the Scriptures teach concerning Christ, that their hearts burned within them, they did not know him till at the table he blessed the bread they were going to eat, as he had of old. So utterly unexpectant were they of his rising from the dead.

On the same evening, these two told of their strange meeting with their risen Lord to the other chosen friends, and Jesus came into the midst of them to the surprise of all present, and showed them his hands and his feet, and ate broiled fish and honey with them to convince them that he indeed was their Lord and Master.

Still, one of the twelve, who was not present, was unconvinced by hearing of all these facts, and would not believe that he had risen until Jesus, a week after, showed himself to them again in like manner, and pointed Thomas to the wounds in his hands and feet and side.

It is plain that the disciples did not expect Jesus would rise from the dead; and according to the narrative they were greatly surprised by his rising.

2. There were CAREFUL PRECAUTIONS against deception by the pretense of his having risen. Those who had procured his death remembered that he foretold his rising from the dead in three days, though his disciples, in their disappointment and distress at his death, seem to have forgotten it. They therefore obtained a guard, and made the sepulcher as secure as they could, by sealing the stone that was placed for a door, and by stationing sentinels to watch over it. They could do no more. And this surely seems enough to guard against any pretense of a resurrection, if it was not real. The disciples could not overpower the guard, steal the body, and then say that he had risen. All opportunity for such deception was cut off.

3. Then look at the PARTICULAR FACTS of his resurrection as they are given. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both secretly disciples of Jesus, having obtained possession of

his body by leave of Pilate, took it down from the cross, wound it with spices in linen, according to the burial custom of the Jews, and placed it in a new tomb with a great stone for a door. The Jewish Sabbath, corresponding to our Saturday, passed, and early in the morning after there was an earthquake. An angel, or two angels, came and rolled away the stone. The soldiers on guard were overawed, trembled with terror, and could make no resistance. Certain women, disciples of Jesus, intending to embalm the body more fully, came early to the tomb, and were told by an angel, "He is not here, he is risen, as he said." They told what they saw and heard, first to Peter and John, who went to the tomb and found not the body, and to the others of the eleven. But while they were on the way to tell the disciples, Jesus himself met them. He first showed himself to Mary Magdalene near the tomb, and afterward to the others; so that they had more to tell than what the angels said to them. They told that they had seen the Lord. Then followed his meeting with

the two who went to Emmaus, and with the company of the disciples in the evening of the same day; and a week later he met with them again, and convinced Thomas of his being verily the same Jesus who was crucified. Afterward, on various occasions, he met with them, ate with them, talked with them, and gave them instructions, during forty days. At one time, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, in the morning, he called to some of his disciples in their boat (there were seven of them), who had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. He told them how to cast their net, and they caught it full. Then they came ashore; and he breakfasted with them. It was in the conversation which followed that he asked Simon three times, "Lovest thou me?" and charged him, "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." Then also he gave the same apostle intimations of his future martyrdom. At another time, by previous appointment, he met more than five hundred disciples together in Galilee.

At length, when he had sufficiently showed himself to his friends, so that all their doubts

were removed, and when he had commissioned them to preach the gospel in all the world, and assured them of his perpetual presence, protection, and blessing, in this work, and after he had instructed them to remain together in Jerusalem till they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, while he was with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

These are the principal facts given us in relation to the subject.

4. The result was THE BELIEF OF HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD FULLY ESTABLISHED in the minds of his disciples. All their doubts were removed. They as fully believed that he had risen from the dead as that he had died. Not one of them in all his after-life called it in question. Nor has one of those who have believed in him as the Son of God, from that day to this, ever called it in question.

His enemies, — those who procured his crucifixion having suggested beforehand that his disciples might steal away his body and pre-

tend that he had risen, and having obtained sentinels to guard the tomb against any such attempt,—when he had risen, bribed the soldiers to say that this very thing had been done while they were asleep. And this was the current explanation of the matter with those who did not believe in Christ.

But his friends, those to whom he showed himself, declared, without exception, without hesitation, with unwavering constancy, that he had risen from the dead. At the peril of their lives, against every interest for this world, in all places, at all times, they gave this testimony. They certainly believed it. Their conduct leaves no room to doubt their honesty. Men do not in such a manner declare what they do not believe.

Were they competent witnesses? Did they know the things of which they spoke?

Their slowness to believe at first, the fullness of Jesus' manifestation to them to satisfy their minds, and the fullness of their belief afterward, conspire to make them fit witnesses of the fact that Jesus did rise. Their

honesty, their capacity, and their opportunities to know the truth, qualified them to testify in the case. And the unquestionable, perfect certainty of their minds is such as to make their testimony very strong. It is difficult to suppose witnesses more competent; and none could be more perfectly agreed and decided than they are. They were very joyful on account of their Lord's resurrection. They did not immediately know what was to follow, nor understand the truth which they would afterward preach. But they were glad when they saw the Friend they so much loved, the Master they so fully trusted. They told of it and talked about it with great joy. Their sadness and despondency at his death were changed into joyful confidence by his resurrection. And so, knowing well that the men of influence and power were all against them, they could testify, and did testify, that Jesus had risen from the dead.

5. THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES DEPENDED ON THE TRUTH OF THIS TESTIMONY. They at first and continually connected their

preaching with the resurrection of Christ. If he had not risen, as the Apostle Paul expressly declared, their preaching was vain; and all faith in the gospel was also vain. Then is there no hope for sinners revealed; no promise for the life to come is given above what man of himself can find; and no light from heaven shines to enlighten the darkness of men.

Now take notice how fully the first preaching of the apostles depended on the resurrection of Christ their Lord. On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed the people of various countries, who were astonished at hearing plain, unlearned men of Galilee speak to them in their different languages; and after quoting a prophecy of Joel as then having its fulfillment, he said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath

raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was a part of that preaching which resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls.

Then afterward, when he and John had healed the lame man who sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple, Peter told the wonder-struck multitude that God had done this to the glory of his Son Jesus, whom they had denied and delivered to death when Pilate wished to release him, to whom they had preferred a murderer, and killed the Prince of life, whom God had raised up, whereof they were witnesses. And at the conclusion of the address he said, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

These men disturbed the priests, the captain

of the temple, and the Sadducees, by preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. They were consequently arrested and imprisoned. And the next day inquiry was made into this miracle of healing a man who had never been able to walk a step in his life. The inquiry was before rulers, elders and scribes, Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, and others; the very men who were concerned in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. They asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Peter answered, . . . "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

The result was that they were threatened and dismissed. Then they went to their own

company, told how they had been treated, united with them in prayer, and received from God a special blessing in answer to their prayers. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

Again they were seized and thrown into the common prison. But the angel of the Lord released them, and sent them to preach in the temple "all the words of this life." And when, in the meeting of the high priest, the council and the senate of Israel, they were questioned, the answer was, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

So did the apostles preach that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and make all the

truth and power of their preaching depend on the fact that he had risen.

6. IF THEY HAD NOT DECLARED THE TRUTH THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN SILENCED BY THEIR POWERFUL AND INTERESTED OPPOSERS. We have seen that they preached at Jerusalem to the people among whom Jesus had been crucified. Before the very chief priests and scribes and rulers of the Israelites who had procured his crucifixion, they preached that he had risen from the dead. They declared themselves witnesses of his resurrection, and called upon all who heard them therefore to repent and believe in Jesus as the only Saviour. They were arraigned for what they did before the Jewish men of power. The very characters and the very men who had conspired and accomplished the death of Christ on the cross were incensed against these disciples for declaring that he had risen, as very naturally they might be. If he was risen, he was the Messiah of Jewish hope, the Prince of life; and they had murdered him. They were charged directly with having committed the crime of murder upon

the Son of God. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, . . . and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead." In their own defense, they ought to have silenced these witnesses for Jesus and his resurrection, if they could. And if the testimony was false, why could they not silence it? They were men high in social position, office, and influence. They felt the charge brought against them by the apostles. They said, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

And was there no way in which they could disprove the terrible accusation? If it had not been true, they could have shown it false. They could have brought evidence that Jesus did not rise from the dead, if he had not risen. If the guards had said truly that while they slept the disciples stole away the body, there would have been also circumstantial proofs confirming their statement; and they could have been brought face to face before the apostles, and the truth would have been shown. In a matter so generally known, and of great

consequence to so many people of power, the truth, if against the weaker party, would have been brought out, and would have silenced their pretensions.

But they were not silenced. They were very bold in behalf of their crucified Lord. They declared that he had risen. And on this declaration they called all men, high and low, rich and poor, even the very men who demanded his crucifixion, to receive him as their Lord and Saviour.

And they were wonderfully successful. By what power did they so prevail? By the power of truth, and by the power of God. They could not have prevailed as they did, if they had testified to a falsehood. They could not have prevailed as they did, if the God of truth had not upheld and blessed them.

The proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead carries with it the proof of all the other miracles of the New Testament. They are all so connected with it that believing this we naturally and reasonably believe them. For my own part, I can not reasonably doubt that

Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And consequently I can not reasonably doubt his wonderful works, nor his divine authority as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Peter and the other apostles preached to the Jews that Jesus rose from the dead, and that therefore they ought to repent and believe in him. In like manner every minister of Christ should preach. Because he rose from the dead, every one who seeks to be saved from sin and death should believe in him. He is the Saviour we need, and the only Saviour we can have. He died for us, and believing in him we need not fear to die. He rose from the dead, and believing in him we may hope for a joyful resurrection. He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and believing in him we may expect that he will take us with him into the mansions of his Father's house.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST THE REVEALER.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." — 2 Cor. 4 : 6.

THERE is here, plainly, a reference to the first manifestation of light, according to the account given us of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis. And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The apostle says the same. "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." If we are Christians we may doubtless believe the writer is speaking of that peculiar spiritual light, which God gives to those who receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Perhaps he was speaking of that

superior spiritual light, which God gave to him and those who, with him, were preaching the gospel. Certainly the apostle was more enlightened into the knowledge of God through Christ than most Christians.

But I do not propose to speak now of the peculiar light which shines into the hearts of Christians, whether it be greater or less. I do propose to speak of the light which shines upon the world from the person of Jesus Christ, with regard to the greatest and most urgent inquiries that can ever exercise the minds of men. And I hope to show that the light which so shines upon us we may reasonably accept as coming from God. And if we may reasonably accept it, we ought to rejoice in receiving it; for it is the light of the glory of God, shining upon us in our darkness to guide us in the way of life.

Three great questions are answered for us by Christ, — all momentous, all urgent, all otherwise without sufficient answer. These questions are, What shall we think of God? What shall we think about a life to come? How

shall we procure the pardon of sin, and preparation for the life to come? God has given us in the New Testament a revelation through Jesus Christ which answers these questions more fully, more reasonably, and more to the satisfaction of the human mind, than they are answered anywhere else. This is what I shall try to show. And if it appears to be true, it is a very strong argument for the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion.

Let us then look at these questions, and see what answers we find to them in Jesus Christ.

1. WHAT SHALL WE THINK OF GOD? The philosopher tells us that God is the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the world. He is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, almighty, omniscient, perfect in all wisdom and goodness.

But we do not get a very clear idea of what a spirit is. And an infinite being is quite beyond our comprehension. We can not take into our minds anything that is infinite. We can only look upon it, and have some ideas concerning it, going as far as we can see. And that is but a very little distance. We

can see into or around infinity but a very short space. It is impossible for us to have adequate ideas of God as the Infinite One.

But God is, and he is infinite. And there is a craving of the human mind for some knowledge of him. We want, we need to have some clear thoughts about him, something more real and intelligible than vague, undefined notions of his existence as an Infinite Spirit.

Doubtless it is this craving which leads men naturally to idolatry. They try to make some representation of God to help their thoughts of him. They know that the image is not God. They know also that the human body is not the soul. But the soul dwells in the body. And so they imagine that God dwells in the image. This helps them to think definitely of God as present. But it does not help them to think of him correctly. It hinders rather. It leads them to think of him as like four-footed beasts and creeping things, or like men, as men are in the world. And so they are turned

away, by these images, from the worship of the true God, the One Infinite Spirit.

The nearest approach we can make to the true idea of God is by purifying and expanding the knowledge we have of the human spirit. Let the human soul be freed from sin, made perfectly pure and holy, and then exalted to the highest capacity in all ways that we can conceive; and by it we get perhaps a nearer approach to the true idea of God than we can, apart from Christ, in any other way.

But better than this is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He is Immanuel, God with us. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

So it was that God was manifest in the flesh, and that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. So also it was that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the

prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

This is the same Son of God, thus represented in the first chapter of Hebrews, who said to his disciples, when one of them desired him to show them the Father, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in

the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Thus in the fourteenth chapter of John we have the express declaration of Jesus that he shows men the Father. They may see the Father in him. In knowing him they know the Father. The disciple is reproved for his slowness in coming to this knowledge. He ought to have gained it before. The repetition of this double declaration, "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me," shows how great importance he attached to this truth. This truth is that we know God through Jesus Christ. We see in him the best, the only true representation of God. It is, indeed, more than a representation; it is a manifestation of God. The pure, invisible, infinite Spirit, whom we can not know so as to comprehend him, and whom the world most urgently needs to know, manifests himself to the world in Jesus Christ, that every one, who will come to Christ and acquaint himself with him, may know God. This revelation which God has made of himself in Jesus Christ is both clearer and fuller than

any other which he has made of himself. It meets the wants of our minds, the craving of our hearts, for some clear knowledge of the Infinite God.

Notice what an intense want of God the psalmist expresses. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." We want to know God as a refuge and a deliverer. How many and great are the dangers from which he alone can guard us, and the evils from which he alone can save us! We want to know him as an object of trust, of confidence, of love, ever ready at hand, never failing. We want to know him, the giver of peace, of comfort, of strength, of joy, now and for ever. And God has come to meet this craving want of our souls by the revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. In him is answered the question, What shall we think of God?

Even the natural attributes of God, his all-power and all-knowledge, are brought more

fully to our minds in Christ than otherwise. He commanded, and the sick were restored to health, the dead were raised to life, the stormy wind and sea were still. So did he show the power of God. He told his disciples of what was occurring at a distance, of what was going to be in time to come, of what was in their own hearts, and the hearts of other men. So did he show the knowledge of God. But especially are the truth and love, the righteousness and compassion of God, shown in his Son. The holiness of his precepts and his life show God's holiness. There was no fault in it. It was God's perfect goodness in a man, and in direct intercourse with men. Then also the kindness, condescension, self-sacrifice of his life, in humiliation, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and of his agony in the garden and his death on the cross, show God's love to the world, God's love to his enemies. In the manifestation which Jesus made of his truth and love we see the glory of God's truth and love.

2. WHAT SHALL WE THINK ABOUT A LIFE TO COME? is the second question mentioned as of intense interest. Is there a life to come? May we be sure that we shall live after death? If we receive the teachings of Christ, no doubt remains about the answer to this question. He sets a life of immortality before us. The kingdom of God, which he came to establish, is not of this world. It is only begun on earth. Of the life to come he speaks freely and familiarly, as if perfectly acquainted with it. It is infinitely superior to the life that now is. Men should not fear death in the cause of righteousness; for great shall be their reward in heaven. And those in the way of wickedness have nothing to hope; for the wicked will perish in everlasting woe.

By the revelation given us through Jesus Christ, the life to come is certain. Man was made for immortality. His aspiring soul will not perish with the body. He will rise to a world of glory and blessedness, or he will sink to a world of despair and misery without end. His declarations and instructions on this sub-

ject are plain and positive. We have them in such statements as this: "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." We have them also in such parables as that of the rich man and Lazarus, and that of the wise and foolish virgins. And with terrible distinctness does he tell us of the future life in the representation of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. He declares, so as to leave no room for a reasonable doubt with those who believe him, that there is everlasting life and blessedness for the doers of good, those who repent of their sins and believe in him; and that there is everlasting death for the doers of evil, those who do not repent and believe in him.

He went to the other world and returned. And before he went he spoke familiarly of that other world. It was one of his specially endowed apostles who said, "Jesus Christ hath

brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." And his apostles speak commonly as having assurance on the subject of the life to come.

Thus the second great question is answered. Perhaps we may wish for more information than is given us about the future life. We often wish to know how we shall live hereafter, and what is the condition of individuals who have gone before us. We may desire to know many things which our Lord has not told us. But he has spoken very distinctly of the life to come, and of the eternal division between those who do good and those who do evil. He has also told us plainly the principle of the distinction between the saved and the lost, and how we may secure a place among the saved.

3. A third great and momentous question was mentioned, which is answered by the revelation of Jesus Christ: How shall we secure the pardon of sin, and with it A PREPARATION FOR THE LIFE TO COME? This plainly is a most urgent and important question for every

human being. We are sinners, all. We know this fact without a revelation from God. It is written with terrible distinctness in the whole history and experience of the world. And there is a witness to it within us in the voice of conscience. But how to obtain the pardon of sin, neither the world in all its history, apart from Jesus Christ, nor any voice within, can tell us.

This he has revealed who came to be a Saviour for us. He tells us that in him we may have salvation from sin and death. He does not set us about earning salvation for ourselves. He does not prescribe a course of labor or of penance, nor a costly offering, nor a long pilgrimage. He does nothing like this. The heathen have done these things. He takes a different course. He does not say that our sins are less than we imagine, or that God is so merciful that he will overlook our transgressions. No, indeed. He sets forth the law of God in its strictness, applying it to the thoughts and intents of the heart; so that all men who will compare themselves with it

must be convinced of sin before God. He says not a word to lessen the sense of sin, nor a word to let down the holiness of God, nor a word to weaken the strength of his law. His words are adapted to fasten upon our minds the holiness of God, the righteousness of his law, and a deep conviction of our own sins. But he says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thus he tells how we may obtain the forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. It is by believing in Him who was lifted up on the cross for sin. We shall be saved by taking him for our Saviour who came to save us. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Trust in him as your Saviour, and your sins shall be taken away. They shall no more be kept in remembrance to your con-

demnation. They are carried away, to be never brought back against you.

The psalm and the proverb had before taught that "He who hideth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Our Lord taught the same truth more impressively in the illustration of the Pharisee and the publican going up to the temple at the hour of prayer. That model prayer of penitence, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," in contrast with the self-justifying of the Pharisee, shows how we should repent, — what repentance is in its true spirit. It receives the assurance of God's pardon: "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Thus, the way for man to obtain the pardon of sin and have the sure promise of everlasting life, is revealed through Jesus Christ. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines upon us in the face of Jesus Christ, opening before us the way to heaven, and calling us to walk in it.

So are answered for us all the great, urgent questions which press upon us most heavily,

and which man of himself can not answer. God speaks to answer them. In his Son Jesus Christ he comes to us, lives on earth, goes about doing good, does many wonderful, miraculous works, speaks in words of heavenly wisdom and authority, suffers the agony of Gethsemane, offers the sacrifice of Calvary, reveals the power and truth and love and compassion which none but he has to reveal.

Such a revelation is what we need. It meets our wants as rational and immortal beings, and as sinners against God. And this adaptation of the gospel to the nature and wants of men is to me a strong proof of its coming from God. The God who made man and knows his wants gives us through Jesus Christ that revelation, which, if received truly, brings us into acquaintance with him, gives us peace in him, and prepares us to glorify and enjoy him for ever. Surely, then, we ought to receive the gospel as from God. If it were not of God, it could not so bring God to us. If it were not from God, it could not so open the way to God. If it were not from God, it could

not so show us the glory and the grace, the truth and the love of God.

There are a few interesting passages of Scripture, words relating to Christ, or spoken by him, which I think the course of thought now presented will help us to understand and appreciate. Some of the expressions in the first chapter of John are of this sort. One is this: "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Another: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." In a different place he says of himself, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Now, if so much light as I have tried to show comes to us through Christ, concerning God, and immortality, and the way of peace with God, and of salvation, is it not fit that he should be called the light of the world, the light that shineth in darkness, the light which lighteth every man, the light of life? What

can be more reasonable than such designations of Christ? Truly, light comes from God, concerning God, concerning man, concerning eternal life and death, through Christ. And it shines in the face of Jesus Christ upon the darkness of this world. It shines clearly, brightly, though many in their darkness do not receive it. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light. Oh that all men everywhere would come to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ!

In the conversation of Jesus with the woman of Samaria, related in the fourth chapter of John, he said to her, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And what has been said, I think, illustrates this saying of Jesus. Water is a refreshment to the thirsty. It satisfies a most urgent want of our bodily nature. So Jesus meets the most urgent wants of the soul. He gives that knowledge, that truth of God,

which brings peace and hope in God, which is refreshment for the soul, enduring for ever, and leading to everlasting life.

Who does not need that refreshment? And where can it be found? Where, indeed, can you find any promise for the life to come, any sure hope of everlasting rest and blessedness, if you turn away from Christ?

"Jesus! to thy celestial light
My dawn of hope I owe,
Once wandering in the shades of night,
And lost in helpless woe."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MORAL LAW MUST HAVE COME FROM GOD.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. xix. 7.

WE have thus far given attention almost wholly to the complete form of the Christian religion, as it is shown us in the New Testament. There, indeed, is to be seen the full excellency and strength of the gospel. Nowhere else does the full-orbed Sun of Righteousness, in all his glory, shine abroad upon the earth. I have said before now that Jesus Christ himself is the best evidence of the Christian religion. So I fully believe. And the more I study the subject, the more certainly this seems to me true. It is only necessary that Jesus Christ should be seen, as he is presented in the New Testa-

ment, that men, all men who are candid and earnest in seeking the truth, may believe him to be the Son of God.

But there is a sense, a true and very important sense, in which Christianity existed before Christ came. The foundation or rudimental truths of the gospel are in the Old Testament. They are not all there, revealed in their completeness. The full truth of the gospel is brought out only in the gospel. Yet the principles of righteousness, which lie at the foundation of it, are as clearly declared in the Old Testament as in the New.

The moral law of the Bible, and of the world under God's government, did not wait for the coming of Christ. It came in the ten commandments fifteen hundred years before. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Of this law, I suppose, the psalmist speaks: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." It may be that some other things besides the ten commandments are included in the expression, "the law of the Lord," yet certainly the ten com-

mandments are the central and most material thing meant.

One of the best illustrations I have ever seen of the truth declared by the text is given in a tract of only four pages, which is not new, and yet I presume is not familiar to all who read this volume. I will give it here; for I think it will better answer the purpose of this chapter than anything else I could put into it. I give the whole tract, beginning with the title.

"WHERE DID HE GET THAT LAW?"

In a neat and beautiful city in one of the Northern States, lived a lawyer of eminence and talents. I do not know many particulars of his moral character; but he was notoriously profane. He had a negro boy, at whom his neighbors used to hear him swear with awful violence. One day this gentleman met a decided Christian, who was also a lawyer, and said to him, "I wish, sir, to examine into the truth of the Christian religion. What books would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?"

The pious lawyer, surprised at the inquiry, replied, "That is a question, sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life."

"It *is* too late," said the inquirer. "I never knew much about it; but I always supposed that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend, however, now to examine the subject thoroughly myself. I have upon me, as my physician says, a mortal disease, under which I may live a year and a half, or two years, but not probably longer. What books, sir, would you advise me to read?"

"The Bible," said the other.

"I believe you do not understand me," resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn; "I wish to investigate the *truth* of the Bible."

"I would advise you, sir," repeated his Christian friend, "to read the Bible. And," he continued, "I will give you my reasons. Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now, to reason on any subject with correctness, we must understand what it is about which we reason. In the next place, I consider the *internal evidence* of the truth of the Scriptures stronger than the external."

"And where shall I begin?" inquired the unbeliever. "At the New Testament?"

"No," said the other; "at the beginning; at Genesis."

The infidel bought a commentary, went home, and sat down to the serious study of the Scriptures. He applied all his strong and well-disciplined powers of mind to the Bible, to try rigidly but impartially its truth. As he went on in the perusal, he

received occasional calls from his professional friend. The infidel freely remarked upon what he had read, and stated his objections. He liked this passage, he thought that touching and beautiful, but he could not credit a third.

One evening the Christian lawyer called, and found the unbeliever at home, walking the room with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued, not noticing that any one had come in, busily to trace and retrace his steps. His friend at length spoke. "You seem, sir," said he, "to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?"

"I have been reading," replied the infidel, "THE MORAL LAW."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked his friend.

"I will tell you what I *used* to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that, having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fireworks, to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural."

"But what do you think now?" interposed his friend.

"I have been looking," said the infidel, "into the *nature* of that law. I have been trying to see

whether I can add anything to it, or take anything from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I can not. It is *perfect.*

"The first commandment," continued he, "directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If he be our Creator, Preserver, and supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat him, and *none other*, as such.

"The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right.

"The third forbids profaneness.

"The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, he ought surely to be worshiped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage, significant of our inward regard. If God be worshiped, it is proper that some *time* should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship him harmoniously and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much; and I do not know that it is too little.

"The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from the family relations.

"Injuries to our neighbor are then *classified* by the moral law. They are divided into offenses against life, chastity, property, and character. And," said he, applying a legal idea with legal acuteness, "I notice that the greatest offense in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus, the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the

greater offense must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery, every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper *desire* in regard to our neighbor.

"I have been thinking," he proceeded, "WHERE DID MOSES GET THAT LAW? I have read history. The Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest and best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. *Where did Moses get this law*, which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous; but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It must have come from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel — infidel no longer — remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity. He lived several years after this conversation, — about three, I believe. He continued to pursue the study of the Bible, his views of the Christian religion expanding and growing correct. Profaneness was abandoned. An oath was now as offensive to him as it was familiar before. When his former

gay companions used one, he habitually reproved them. He remonstrated with them upon its folly and want of meaning, and said that he could never imagine before how painful profane language must be to a Christian. But did he become a sincere disciple of Christ? He always expressed great doubt upon that point. He could hope for nothing from the world, and he was afraid that he might choose other pleasures from that circumstance, without a radical change of heart.

I learned these particulars, a few years since, from one of the parties; and have endeavored to give them with strict accuracy.

Let the reader meditate on this history, for it is believed to be rich in practical instruction. The main thought is this, that the moral law is a monument, — a sublime monument of the great moral transaction at Sinai, in the delivery of the ten commandments. But mark also the species of unbelief here exhibited; the improvement made of a lingering disease; the judicious advice and kind attention of the Christian friend; the beautiful arrangement of Providence by which these concurred; the excellence of the moral law as explained and felt; and, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the glorious reforming power of the Bible.

I do not know the author of this tract. I do not know where the facts occurred. It is pos-

sible to suppose that they never did occur, though there is no good reason to doubt that they were real. But even supposing these things never did take place, *the argument is the same.*

We have the law of the ten commandments. It comes to us from the early ages of the Jewish nation, from the early ages of all written history. It exists to-day as the perfect summary of moral duty, — not the most perfect, but the only perfect summary of moral duty which the world knows. Philosophers, ancient and modern, have found no fault in it, and have found nothing else to compare with it.

Whence came that law? It came by Moses through the Jewish people, and through them to the world. But where did Moses get it? Did he learn it among the Egyptians, with whom he was educated? How then was it lost from them? And how did the Greeks, who learned some things from the Egyptians, and were afterward the most cultivated people of the world, fail to get it and make it known? If other nations had it before Moses, we should

have learned something of it from them; and the knowledge of it would not have been confined, through all the ancient ages, to the Hebrews. In all the literature of the world before Christ, it is not found except among the Jews. And, according to all their history and traditions, it came by Moses. It must have come to the world by him. Was it then original with him? Did he make it? If so, how came he alone, of all the ancient wise men, to be endowed with such wisdom and goodness as to frame this law? Was he especially inspired of God, as no man before had been, and so enabled to publish to his people the only perfect moral law? If this were the fact, the law came from God; and that is the very thing which the believer in the Bible claims. Then God has given to men a revelation; and that revelation is contained in the Bible. Then God spoke by Moses, and commissioned him to be the teacher, leader, and lawgiver of his people. And then all the teachings of Moses are to be received as of divine authority in relation to the purposes for which they were given. The

law which was given by Moses is a reason why we should receive for truth the statement of the miracles which were wrought by Moses. He who gave the great leader of the Israelites the perfect moral law gave him also, we need not doubt, the power to work among the Egyptians and his own people those stupendous miracles which established his authority. He claimed that God was with him, and he proved that God was with him. When the proof was given there could be no denying it. The people whom he led out of bondage in Egypt and through the desert of Arabia, till they came in sight of their promised land, had reason to believe in him as commissioned and inspired of God to be their leader. He established for them a system of moral instruction and religious worship, by which they were distinguished from all other nations. By that system no immorality and no idolatry were allowed. In thirty-five hundred years the world has made no improvement upon that code of morals. Nor in the same period has

it made any advance in the knowledge of God, *except by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

There is one God; and no other being is to be compared with him. God is a Spirit; and he can not be represented by any image. He is eternal and supreme, just and merciful, infinite in power and knowledge, perfect in truth, wisdom, and goodness. This is the God of the Hebrews, who gave the ten commandments, and governs the world by them. They believed that he revealed the moral law by Moses, and that he gave them other revelations by Moses, and by the prophets who lived afterward. And if we are reasonable, must we not conclude that they were right in this belief? How could it otherwise be that on the two most important subjects of all human inquiry, the law of morals, and the knowledge of God, those people surpassed the Greeks and Romans with their highest culture? And how can it be, that, even in all modern nations, none surpass those ancient Israelites in these things, except such as acknowledge the revelation made to them and the further revelation made to the

world by Jesus Christ? It can be only as the plain truth is told us in the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." It is not a Jewish law. It is for mankind. It is for us. There are none to whom it does not apply. Its adaptation to all men everywhere is one part of its perfection, and one of the marks of its divine origin. In that age of the world, among such a people, just delivered from severe bondage in Egypt, but partially civilized, not far advanced in intellectual culture, a law devised by man would have been limited in its adaptation, would have had something in it local and temporary, suitable only for the people to whom it was given. Among any people in any age this would have been the fact. The man has not lived in this imperfect world who, of himself, could have

devised a perfect law for all men, in all ages, and in all conditions.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Its influence, when it is received, is here brought into view. All men are prone to think well of themselves. It is one of the infirmities, the marked imperfections of men, that they naturally think themselves better than they are. And the application of the moral law in its full sense will convert them from this error. It will convince them of sin. There is nothing so effectual to make men see and feel that they are sinners, as the application of the perfect law of righteousness to their life. So certain is this that any one who wishes to know his own character, his own sins, and how he stands before God, will find it the most effectual way to compare himself honestly with the law of God. He will thus be likely to see how far he is from what he ought to be. And as nothing else will be so effectual to show him the truth concerning himself in this matter, so this is one of the most effectual influences to turn him from the

error of his ways. Seeing his sins, he will feel the need of turning from them. Seeing his sins, he will feel the need of a Saviour. He may not indeed turn from his sins to the Saviour. But if he do not, he will not obey the truth. He will obey unrighteousness. He will not receive the light that shines upon his life, to walk by it; but he will turn away from that light to walk in darkness, in the darkness of error, of sin. He chooses darkness rather than light. And the longer he continues in that way, the more likely he is to continue in it. Turning away from the light to walk in darkness, he puts darkness for light, error for truth, evil for good. Then it is easy for him to think he is doing good, when he is doing evil. And so he is likely to be confined in the way of evil beyond hope of recovery. Falsehood and wickedness are naturally joined together, and do not go apart. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light,

that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

The law of truth is the law of God. It is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EVIDENCE OF PROPHECY.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." — 1 Pet. i. 19.

THE apostles, in their first preaching of the gospel, constantly referred to the Old Testament Scriptures in proof that Jesus was the Messiah. They made great use of the evidence of prophecy. It is plain, from reading the Acts and the Epistles, that they found such prophetic language applying to Jesus as had great influence with them and their hearers.

One reason for this probably was, that they were Jews, and always at first addressed Jews, among whom there was a general expectation of a Messiah, a mighty Prince and Saviour about to come, and among whom also the prophecies of the Old Testament were received

as of divine authority. Even Paul, when he went out of Judæa into the surrounding countries for the express purpose of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, in nearly every place he visited, went first into the synagogue of the Jews. So it was in Salamis, in Antioch of Pisidia, in Iconium, in Thessalonica, in Berea, in Athens, in Corinth, and probably in other places. Beginning in this way, he extended his ministry to the Gentiles. Of course it was natural that great use should be made of the prophecies. They were brought out to the notice of those who expected the Messiah, and their application to Jesus of Nazareth was shown so as to produce a strong impression upon candid Jewish hearers.

With us the New Testament is quite as much believed, and quite as easily proved to be from God, as the Old Testament. Therefore the proof that Jesus is the Messiah, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, may not make so strong an impression upon us as it did upon the Jews. Still, this kind of proof has not lost its use. It is very important as a

part of the evidences of Christianity. And I propose in this chapter to make it the subject of consideration. I shall only select some of the plainest of the prophecies, and try to show, by a few comments, that they so apply to Christ and the Christian religion, as to make it reasonable to believe that God inspired his servants, hundreds of years before the events, to foretell the coming of Christ and the blessings of his salvation.

In the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, among other instructions by Moses given near the end of his life, when he was warning the people of Israel against false prophets, he said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto thee: unto him ye shall hearken." Then, referring to the fears of the people at the manifestations of God's terrible power, when he gave the ten commandments from Sinai, and their request that God would not directly speak to them, but that Moses should speak, it is added, "And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they

have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Now it is worthy of special notice, that after Moses there was no prophet of the Old Testament who spoke with such authority as he had. He was the lawgiver of his people. No one afterward was like him in this respect. No one exercised such authority as he did both in speaking and in action. No one had such direct and constant communication with God in behalf of the people. No one gave, by signs and wonders which God enabled him to show, such striking and constant proof of God's presence with him. And no other stood so before the people as if he were in the place of God, exercising perfect authority in all things, and conducting all the affairs of the nation as God directed, that they might be peculiarly the people of God. Neither Samuel, nor David,

nor Elijah, nor Isaiah, nor Daniel, was like Moses in these things.

But, according to the New Testament history, Jesus Christ was like Moses in these things. He gave laws to his people with as high authority. He declared anew the moral law that came by Moses. He spoke and acted as if he had the authority of God in very truth. He spoke as having constant communication with God. He proved that God was with him by his many signs and wonders. He claimed to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and to reign in it with the power and authority of God. There was a very remarkable likeness between Christ and Moses, though Christ was by far the greater. As the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant; . . . but Christ was faithful as a Son over his own house."

This prophecy by Moses, expressed in the plain language of prediction, is twice quoted in the Acts, once by the Apostle Peter, and once by Stephen, the first martyr, as applying to

Jesus and fulfilled in him. And certainly, such a prediction made by Moses, capable of no other application but to Jesus Christ, and so claimed as applying to him, is worthy of special consideration.

There are various passages in the Psalms commonly understood by Christians as applying to Christ. Most or all of them are quoted in the New Testament as referring to him. But I do not propose to dwell on them. It would require too large a space. I proceed, therefore, to speak of some remarkable passages in the prophet Isaiah.

One of them is the sixth and seventh verses in the ninth chapter. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

According to the view of those who believe in the Christian religion as given us by the express and special revelation of God, this passage is wonderfully descriptive of Christ and his kingdom. So understood, though it was uttered more than seven hundred years before Christ came, it is very highly significant, having a most precious important sense. It is inspired of God, and prophetic of Christ.

But if it do not apply to Christ, what sense has it? It claims to be prophetic. The declaration is, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." If then it is not prophetic, it is a false pretension. If it is prophetic, it must apply to Christ; because there is no other in the whole history of the world to whom it can apply. And if it is not prophetic, besides being false in its claim to be, it is a high-sounding, unmeaning rhapsody. And can it be supposed by the most determined skeptic, that a writer of the high intellectual power and the deep reverence for God which all readers must

see characterize Isaiah, uses language like this in mere false, pretentious, unmeaning rhapsody? The supposition is not reasonable.

We will turn now to the eleventh chapter of the same book of prophecy. And here we find language no less remarkable in its description of Christ, according to the New Testament account of him. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

After this description, I ask, in the words of the Ethiopian eunuch to Philip, Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Does it not exactly describe the moral and spiritual character and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is placed before us in the New Testament? If any wished to set forth his ability and spirit and personal influence, according to the gospel histories, he could scarcely find more fitting language than this. The Spirit of the Lord was with him in such fullness as never blessed any other man; and he had wisdom and understanding and authority and power beyond any other man. He spoke too with force and effect well agreeing with the declaration, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." And never was any other so girded around as he with righteousness and faithfulness.

The four following verses describe, in language highly figurative and poetic, the influence of the Christian religion. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard

shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

There is one thing which makes us feel the truth and fitness of these words less than we should, and that is the small degree in which the Christian religion is manifestly the controling power in the world. The proper energy of the gospel is but very imperfectly carried into effect in the most favored places in all the earth. Consequently we fail to see very plainly, in a great many cases, that savage and cruel men are so changed as this figurative language describes. But we all know that, when men receive Jesus Christ as their teacher, their Lord, their Saviour, they are wonderfully changed,—transformed in some instances, like

the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the calf and the young lion together. We do not yet find men ceasing to hurt and destroy; nor do we yet find the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth, as the waters cover the sea. But we do find some progress in the spread of the gospel of peace and salvation; and we do find that men by its influence are learning to do good and not evil to one another. And among some of the heathen to whom the gospel has been carried, its transforming power has appeared just such as to be most fitly described by the remarkable words of the prophet. Of this nearly every mission to savage or barbarous heathen furnishes some admirable examples.

I must pass by some passages of great prophetic interest, which I should like to bring to your notice. We will turn now to the fifty-third chapter of this prophet, or rather to the passage that comprises the last three verses of the fifty-second and the whole of the fifty-third. I do not think it necessary to quote the whole, as it is a familiar passage. It is with good

reason one of the best-known portions of the Old Testament Scriptures. It is certainly one of the most remarkable. It presents to us a person having a singular variety and contrariety of qualities. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, extolled, and be very high. His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He is like a root out of dry ground, has no comeliness, no beauty to be desired, is despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and men turn away from him. He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, while men think him stricken and smitten of God. All men have gone astray and turned away from God, wandering like lost sheep. But he suffers for all with the patience and submission of a lamb brought to the slaughter. He is cut off for the transgression of the people; but he is guilty of no violence nor deceit. The Lord lays on him the terrible sufferings which he endures, and will reward him accordingly. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall

be satisfied with the results of his labors and sorrows. He shall justify many; for he shall bear their iniquity.

These specimens of the prophet's language do not give the force of the whole; but they give some hints of it. And is there not a likeness very wonderful to the common Christian ideas of the Saviour, learned from the New Testament? Must we not conclude that such a description of a despised, meek, suffering, righteous Saviour, exalted, glorious, and glorified by God in the results of his sufferings, given seven hundred years before Christ came, applicable to no other one in all the world's history, and applicable to him with wonderful exactness, — must we not conclude that such a description was given by the prophet as a revelation from God of him who was to come and did come to be made an offering for the sins of men, and to save them who believe in him? To what other conclusion, with any good reason, can we come?

I will not now set before you any other prophecies in the Old Testament, of Christ as

he lived on the earth. But I will point you to two passages in the writings of Daniel, and ask you to consider whether they are not prophetic of events which are now in progress, though not yet by any means fully accomplished. One of them is found in the second chapter of Daniel, in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation. The four greatest empires of the ancient world, the world before Christ, are there sketched briefly and strongly. The fourth kingdom of iron and clay is generally understood to be the Roman empire with its elements of mingled strength and weakness.

But here I must turn aside to say a word about the book of Daniel. Some infidel writers have said that these visions were written at a later period, when the events of which they speak as future had occurred, and then were ascribed to Daniel and the time of the captivity, that they might have great importance in the eyes of the people. But certainly they could not have been so late as the time when the weakness of the Roman empire was developed; for that was after the time of Christ.

The clay mingled with the iron, showing that the empire which broke in pieces all others was itself to be broken, — partly strong and partly broken are the words, — could not represent its condition before Christ came; for then it had not shown its weakness. That representation must therefore be prophetic. And the pretense of its being written later than the events it predicts shows the weakness and falsehood of the argument against it.

But the particular passage that I wished to notice in this second chapter is the symbolic representation of the kingdom of God. "Thou sawest that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." In the interpretation of the dream this is said to mean

that the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, but shall consume all the kingdoms before it, and shall stand for ever. Is this prophetic of the influence which Christ and his religion are having and are to have in the world; or is it not? I propose the question for you to think of it as may seem to you reasonable.

The other passage of Daniel that I wished to mention is in the seventh chapter. Daniel had a vision of four beasts representing the four great empires. One beast was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth was dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly. This beast destroys the others, and has ten horns, and another little horn, before which three of the ten were rooted up; and it has eyes like a man, and a mouth speaking great things. Then is a vision of the Ancient of days, on a throne of fire, executing judgment; and the beast is slain, and his body given to the flames. Then one like the Son of man comes to the Ancient of days. "And there was given him dominion and glory and

a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It is afterward declared, as the explanation of these visions, that the four beasts are four kingdoms, and that the fourth and most terrible shall be utterly destroyed by the judgment of God. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Does this mean that Christ, setting up the kingdom of God on earth, will overcome every power which stands against it, and it shall prevail over all the earth? I believe this is the meaning. And is it not reasonable so to believe?

I have now presented a few of the plainest examples of prophecy in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the history of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament, and in the progress of

that kingdom of truth and righteousness which he established in the world. The express predictions of Moses and of Isaiah are singularly met in the life and acts and character of Christ. And to the Christian the prophetic visions of Daniel seem to be in process of fulfillment. The course of events for the last two thousand years makes this impression upon most Christian minds.

And if this be the truth, what prospects are before us of the progress and power and prevalence of the Christian religion! Nothing can stand against it. All the systems of government, all the plans and organizations of men for wealth and power and glory, which are opposed to the kingdom of God, the reign of truth and righteousness, must be broken down. In the conflict which is going forward through the world, advancing as the gospel makes progress, between truth and falsehood, righteousness and iniquity, Christ and Satan, the truth, the right, the Christ shall prevail. The kingdom of God shall be established in all the earth. Its greatness shall fill the whole

world. They who turn away from it are lost without hope. They who stand against it must perish without escape.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of salvation by him, is the hope of the world. To it Moses and the prophets bear testimony. There is nowhere else the promise of peace and hope on earth, and of salvation for the life to come. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And since none of us can deny that we are sinners, take him, I pray you, for your Saviour and your Lord. There is no other in whom you can trust. There is no other way of hope and salvation for men.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." — Gal. iii. 29.

IF there is a plan of salvation for sinful men, which began to be declared far back in the history of the human race, which was the subject of direct promise, as the ages passed along, giving assurance of God's special favor to those who trusted in him and served him, and which was fully developed and explained after the coming and crucifixion of Christ, this plan must be God's, and must be made known by his revelation to men. The Christian says that there is such a plan, and that the Bible contains God's revelation with regard to it. This the infidel denies. Which is right? This is the great question as to the truth of Christianity.

The Christian regards the Old Testament and the New Testament as essentially connected, together revealing God's one plan of salvation for men. He does not look upon them as differing in their fundamental principles of truth. He looks upon them as one in their design and in the substance of their instruction to men. He finds in the Bible as a whole, containing the Old and the New Testaments, one Saviour and one way of salvation. There is to him a divine consistency and a divine authority pervading the whole, making of all the different parts one book, the Bible, unlike other books, as inspired of God, containing the revelation which he has given concerning the way of eternal life. But to the unbeliever it is only a collection of ancient writings of more or less interest and usefulness, yet of no peculiar divine authority.

The passage, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," brings into view the fact of an essential connection between the Old Testament and the New. It plainly declares that the

true disciples of Christ have secured to them all the blessings which God promised to Abraham for his children. According to the Old Testament, Abraham was the friend of God, and was approved by God, because he believed God's word of promise to him. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. He was not justified because he obeyed the law, but because he believed the word of God. So they who believe in Jesus Christ and the word of God which comes through him are justified, treated with favor as if they were just, because they believe. They who believe in Christ are blessed, as the believing Abraham was blessed. Both are approved of God on the same ground, — on the ground of their faith. The condition of God's blessing is the same, essentially, according to the Old Testament as it is according to the New Testament.

The real connection between the two different parts of the Bible will be seen, I think, if we look at some very important things in which they are alike, and some important

things in which they are different. I do not now speak of their likeness or difference as to form and literary character, but as to the substance of truth in them, their moral and religious teachings.

Let us first look at some very important things in which they are alike.

1. THERE IS THE SAME GOD IN BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. No idol can represent God. Jehovah, the Maker of all things, the living God, in distinction from all that are called gods, and set before men by images of wood, stone, or metal, graven by art and man's device, is, both in the Old Testament and the New, a Spirit, almighty, eternal, omniscient, the God of truth and love, the God of holiness and mercy, the God of justice and grace. He governs the world which he has made, by righteousness and love, by his providence, by his law, and by his gospel.

Infidels tell us that there is a wide difference between the God of the Old Testament and

the God of the New Testament; that one is a national God, of the Jews only, and terrible in his severity; and that the other is the God of love, the great Father of mankind. But I do not find any such great difference. I find, as I shall try to show in another part of this chapter, the same God who is set forth in the Old Testament, more clearly and fully revealed in the New Testament, — not another, not different.

But the difference between the God of the Bible and those which are called gods, where the Bible is not known, is wide indeed. Among all the people of the world, without the Bible, in ancient times and in modern times, there is either idolatry or absolutely no God, as among some of the African tribes, — except perhaps among the North American Indians. Everywhere, excepting among those to whom the Bible is known, the prevalent ideas of God are irrational, debasing, often abominable, or, if not so bad, they are exceedingly scanty and unsatisfying. The difference between the one God of the Jews and of Christians and the

gods of all other people known is exceedingly broad.

2. THERE IS THE SAME MORAL LAW in the Old Testament and in the New. The law of the ten commandments is acknowledged in both parts of the Bible as declaring the true principles of all righteousness. It was proclaimed from Sinai to the Jews. But there is nothing which limits this law to the Jews. It is fit, as a moral law, for mankind; and when it is declared it takes hold on the consciences of all men. In the New Testament no new law is given. The glosses and perversions which had grown over the law of Sinai as it was interpreted by the corrupt Jewish teachers are cleared away, and its application to the heart as well as to the outward acts is declared. That summary of it given by the Lord Jesus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," is quoted from the Old Testament. The two parts of it are found in two different places, the first part in Deuteronomy (vi. 5), and the second part in Leviticus

(xix. 18). So plain and certain is it that the moral law of the Jews is the moral law of Christians. Look where you will in the Old Testament, you find nothing less required than obedience to the ten commandments, and nothing contrary to them allowed. And look where you will in the New Testament, nothing more is required than obedience to the ten commandments. Even that "new commandment," which our Saviour said to his disciples, "I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another," is only a particular application of the ten commandments. It is not another or a different law. It is the law of love required to be carried into full effect between the disciples of Christ. And by the degree in which it is effectual it is made the test of discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The moral law of the Old Testament and of the New Testament is one. All moral duties are included in it *for all men in all time.*

3. THERE IS THE SAME GROUND OR CON-

DITION OF GOD'S APPROBATION AND BLESSING in the Old Testament and in the New. It is not the impossible ground of obedience to the law, but the practicable ground of faith in God's truth and love. I call the ground of obedience to the law impossible, because all men are sinners ; and none can be approved of God and blessed with his favor on the condition that they are righteous. They are not righteous according to the true sense of the law. The man who does the things commanded shall live in the approbation and blessing of God on what he does. But as no one has done these things, no man can have the approbation and blessing of God on this condition. Abraham believed God, trusted to God's word of promise, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. He was received into God's favor as if he had been righteous.

So, now that Jesus Christ is revealed as the Saviour of sinners, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; those who believe in him are received into God's favor on account of their faith.

"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Thus, according to the teachings of the Old Testament and the New, men may come into the favor of God, and be entitled to his promised blessing, on one and the same condition. That condition is that they believe God, that they trust to his word of truth and love, as Abraham believed and was approved, as those who receive Jesus Christ for their Saviour believe and are approved. There is one plan of salvation running through the whole Bible, one condition of God's favor and promised blessing for the Jew and for the Christian. "For the just shall live by his faith. But without faith it is impossible to please God."

In these three most important things the Old Testament and the New Testament are alike. They present to us the same God, the one living, infinite, eternal, almighty, omniscient Spirit, the God of truth and love, of jus-

tice and mercy; they present to us the same moral law, the law of the ten commandments; and they set before us the same condition of God's favor and blessing, — the condition that we trust to God's word of truth and love.

It will help us to see the exceeding great importance, the really essential nature of this likeness between the Old Testament and the New Testament, if we look also at some strongly marked differences between them.

1. The Old Testament was originally given to A SINGLE NATION for their especial use; but the New Testament was given for ALL MEN. From the time of Moses certainly, the worship of the one true God was confined, with few exceptions if any, to the single nation of the Israelites. Probably from the time of Abraham it was confined to his descendants. And Moses is the earliest writer of the Scriptures. To him was revealed the law from Sinai; and by him it came to the people of Israel. He prescribed, by the direction of God, a system of worship and of religious instruction for that one people. And the whole of the Old Testa-

ment Scriptures, of which he was the earliest writer, was given at first to them for their especial benefit. Moses and all the prophets were of the Israelitish nation. They wrote in their own language and for their own people. Other people knew not the true God, nor the methods of worship by which he was honored.

But the New Testament was given, and was manifestly designed to be, from the first, for the people of all nations. The worship it enjoins and the instruction it gives are adapted alike to all men. There is nothing in it limited by nationality.

And this makes a very important part of the difference between the two portions of the Bible.

2. The New Testament reveals MORE FULLY AND CLEARLY the truth and love of God than the Old Testament. The New Testament revelation is fuller and clearer, not because there is more of it, for there is less in the space it occupies, but because in the Old Testament Moses and the prophets spoke as the word of the Lord came to them; and in the New Tes-

tament God speaks to us more directly by his Son. Here God comes to us in Christ, and speaks such words of light and power, of truth and love, of terrible justice and tender compassion, that even his enemies were constrained to say, "Never man spake like this man." Throughout the New Testament Jesus is the representative of God. There is no such distinct, and, we may almost say, complete manifestation of the Holy One in the Old Testament. And so we have in this smaller portion of the Bible a much fuller and clearer showing forth of God's truth and love. He is not shown as a different being in his character, in his Spirit, and in his actual government of the world; but he lets more of himself be seen, so that men may know him better. He acts himself out among men in the works of Jesus Christ. He speaks to them in the words of Jesus Christ. He sorrows and suffers for them in the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

The name Immanuel is peculiarly significant of that revelation which God makes of himself

by his Son. He is God with us, our Father, our Friend, our Elder Brother, our Saviour, our Lord. He is the precious object of our love and trust, satisfying our hearts with all that is good and true and full of enduring, glorious promise. Thus the New Testament reveals to us more clearly and fully the truth and love and power and glory of the one almighty, eternal, holy God of the Old Testament.

3. A third difference is, that the Old Testament teaches by SIGNIFICANT FORMS God's way of pardon, peace, and life for sinners; and the New Testament does the same by more SIGNIFICANT ACTS.

The sacrifice of animals was a very prominent part of the religious services prescribed for the Jews. All the people were to come before God, and, confessing their sins, were to seek pardon by the offering of appointed sacrifices. The sacrifice was a solemn and affecting transaction. It no doubt had a meaning. And what was its meaning? As the thoughtful and intelligent Jew brought an innocent

animal to be put to death, an offering for his sin, what must he have understood to be meant by the transaction? What could he understand but this, that as the animal died for the sin of him who offered it, so he deserved to die for his own sin? He confessed himself a sinner, the sacrifice was offered for him, and then he was pardoned and accepted of God. Thus it was signified that the sinner deserved to die as the animal died, and that God's way of pardon, peace, and life was by the confession of this truth, and seeking God's mercy. God's method of pardon, peace, and life for sinners was taught by the significant form of sacrificing animals.

It has been common to suppose that the Jewish sacrifices were typical, representing beforehand the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men. And with the New Testament and its teachings we may well believe this to be the fact according to the plan of God. But the Jews before Christ came could not know that their sacrifices of animals pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men, un-

less they were instructed by the Spirit of God more fully than the Old Testament shows us that they were. Some of the prophets perhaps saw this meaning of the sacrifices. But I can not think the people generally saw it. Yet all could see, that, as the animal died, the sinner, in whose behalf it was offered, deserved to die. And so it was taught by the significant form of sacrifice that God's way of pardon, peace, and life for sinful men, is by their confession of their sin and of their just condemnation for sin, and by their trusting to God's mercy.

The same thing is directly taught in words in Proverbs xxviii. and other places "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

And in the New Testament the same thing is taught by the more significant transaction of Christ's being offered a sacrifice for the sins of men. It is expressly declared here, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He died for us, on account of our sins.

And so it is signified to us that we deserve to die for our own sins. Then how terrible must be the evil of sin, that Jesus, the Son of God, must die for it! Who can measure the greatness of the ruin which it brings, since nothing less than the sacrifice of Christ could recover us from that ruin?

How urgent then is the need of a way to be saved, that presses upon every sinner! God only can open for us such a way. And he has done it. His gift of Jesus Christ his Son to die for our sins declares that he has done it. The offering of Christ on the cross a sacrifice for sin teaches, in a manner most impressive and most tenderly affecting, God's way of pardon and life for the sinner. It says, "Confess thy sin, turn from it, and trust to him who gave his Son for thee. Believe in God. Trust his word of truth and love. Trust his most impressive acts of grace toward thee. In his giving his beloved Son for thee, see how he loves thee!" He acts out his love by that wonderful sacrifice. And his action says to all sinners, "If you persist in your sin you must

perish with a terrible destruction. But confess it, turn from it, trust in me, and you shall be saved for ever." Thus God in Christ speaks to us and provides salvation for us.

The same way of salvation is taught both in the Old Testament and in the New, but in the New Testament it is taught more fully and more affectingly. And this is an important difference. In this the New Testament is far superior to the Old, though there is an essential connection between the two. The later revelation is the filling out of that which was begun in the earlier.

I have now tried to show that the Bible is one book, its two distinct parts, which we call the Old Testament and the New Testament, having an agreement, an essential union in setting before us the same God of truth and love, of justice and grace; in declaring the same perfect moral law, and in offering the same conditions of God's favor and salvation.

Even the important differences, that the Old Testament was given at first especially for the use of one peculiar nation, and the New Testa-

ment for all men; that the New Testament sets forth more clearly and fully the truth and love of God; and that also it sets forth more clearly and fully the way of pardon and peace with God; — these differences show that one plan runs through the whole, making it, in the substance of its truth, one book, the Word of life.

This is the Christian view of the Bible. Is it not more reasonable, and rather to be received as true, than the infidel view, which makes it a collection of ancient writings, some of them interesting and valuable, others useless, but none of them of any divine authority?

"How precious is the book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

"This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way;
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day."

CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST SUSTAINS THE LAW.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." — Rom. x. 4.

IN the twelfth chapter I tried to show that the moral law is an argument for the divine authority of the Bible. The ten commandments are such a law, so full and so faultless that man could not have invented it, and God must have given it. This was the argument.

Now I propose to draw an argument for the divine authority of the Christian religion from the relation of Christ to the law, as it is declared in the passage above cited: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The authority of the law must be maintained. Otherwise, of what use is it? There might as

well be no law, as a law which has no authority. And if the moral law, with all its excellency proving that God gave it, has lost its power, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that God does not govern the world by it, or that his attempt to govern the world by it is a failure. This is so plain that it seems to be absolutely certain, if the Christian religion is from God, that some provision must be found in it which will uphold the law in all its force. A failure in this respect must be fatal to the claims of any religion which professes to come from the God who gave the ten commandments. At the same time, a religion which maintains the authority and goodness of the law, and also brings men to be at peace with God, and gives them salvation from sin, bears on its face strong marks of being from God. The righteousness of the law is so manifest that a religion which upholds it bears strong marks of being from God, and being true; and a religion which does not uphold it, carries on its face strong marks of falsehood.

1. Now, in the first place, THE TEACHINGS

OF CHRIST DECLARE THE PERPETUAL AUTHORITY OF THE MORAL LAW. Mark his words. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Then he goes on to show the application of the law to the thoughts and intents of the heart. On another occasion he said, "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Then, as if to guard against the thought of any possibility that the law may be weakened by the coming of the kingdom of God, he adds, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." So carefully does he teach that his kingdom preserves and does not destroy the law. Everywhere does he hold up the highest standard of moral duty. With all that he says of forbearance and kindness and forgiveness, there is not the slightest relaxation from the absolute perfection and the eter-

nal authority of the law of the ten commandments. As they were declared on Mount Sinai, and written by the finger of God on the tables of stone, they stand for ever.

2. Just in agreement with this teaching is THE NATURE OF THE LAW. It is right; therefore, in its full strength, authority, and goodness, it must stand. Righteousness must be preserved, or there is no solid ground for goodness to stand on. It becomes only blind and weak kindness, if it be separated from righteousness. It has no strength, no regulating principle, no real blessing for men. If then righteousness be abandoned, goodness can not live.

It has been supposed, that, in the order of nature, or in the nature of the two principles, goodness comes first, and righteousness springs from it, or is contained in it. It may be so. It may be that the principle of righteousness is contained in the principle of goodness, as an essential part of it. Certainly, goodness is something more than mere kindness. And what more is it, except as it combines with

kindness the law of right? Then kindness and righteousness are both united in it and both essential to it. They are both essential to goodness and united in it, however the union may be explained.

The law of righteousness must therefore be preserved, or goodness itself is lost. There was then a necessity that the Lord Jesus Christ should be tenacious of that law, as he was. He came into the world to save sinners, in agreement with the law of righteousness; and he could not save them in any other way. The very goodness of God, that which constitutes his worthiness of love and honor and trust, requires that he should preserve the law of righteousness in its full force. This seems absolutely undeniable, so far as we can reason on such subjects.

We have then two facts settled: 1. Jesus Christ declares that he came to maintain, and not to destroy or weaken, the law of righteousness. 2. From the very nature of this law it must be maintained, or goodness itself is lost. God's own goodness can not be preserved, ex-

cept his justice also is preserved in its full strength. His very goodness requires him to be just, to maintain the perfect law of justice in its full force and its unquestioned authority.

3. We come now, in the third place, to consider the declaration, — "FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH." He meets the necessity of the case. To every believer he answers the purpose of the law in maintaining righteousness. Its excellency and authority are fully preserved as to every believer, though the law, which he has broken, is not executed upon him. The believer in Jesus is saved, while he honors the law in confessing that he deserves to die by its execution. He declares that the law is just in its sentence of condemnation upon him; and the Saviour declares that he shall not die, because he himself has died for him, the just for the unjust. Thus the law of righteousness is maintained; and yet wicked men, when penitent, are saved from the doom of death, which the law declares they deserve.

Look at the law. It is for righteousness. It commands all righteousness. It condemns all unrighteousness. Its authority maintained is the reign of perfect justice. The course of life which it requires is nothing different from that of perfect justice and goodness. Maintained and executed in its full force, justice and goodness are its aim and effect, its end. This is God's end in ordaining and upholding and executing the law.

But the law says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It condemns every transgressor, and gives no promise. It has no Saviour, and provides no salvation. And all men have sinned. All are transgressors of the law.

What can be done? Is there possible a way of escape? Is salvation for sinners among the things which can be?

Not by any method which men can devise. Not by any power which man possesses. Not by any authority and power less than God's. Not by any other way than such as will preserve the authority and righteousness of his law. The law is God's. And he only can

have authority sufficient to stay its execution upon the transgressor. It is righteous without fault, and such as perfect righteousness requires should be preserved in all its strength. If then sinners are to be saved, it must be in some way which will keep the strength of the law in its perfect righteousness secure. Thus the wisdom of God and the authority of God must be employed for the salvation of men; and they must be so employed as to preserve, in its perfect authority and force, God's law of eternal righteousness.

Now let us turn to the plan of salvation by Christ. He comes with the authority and the power of God. He proclaims anew the righteousness of God's law. And he offers salvation as a free gift to sinful men. The single condition on which he insures it is that they receive him as their Saviour. They, entrusting themselves to him, righteous as the law is righteous, confess the righteousness of the law in condemning themselves. And they, giving up themselves to his service as their Lord and Saviour, take his law of righteousness for the

rule of their lives, and his loving mercy, in which he died for their sins, as the hope of their souls.

Thus it is that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He suffers for the sinner, the just for the unjust. He gives salvation as a free gift to the sinner penitent and believing in him. And he brings the sinner, thus penitent and believing, to acknowledge and honor the perfect righteousness of the law. Jesus suffers. The sinner is saved. The law is maintained, honored, loved. The love of Christ bears the curse of sin. The sinner trusting in Christ is freely forgiven for Christ's sake. And thus saved through Christ, he must glorify God in all his righteousness and love.

This is the plan of salvation by Christ according to the gospel. It comes professing to be from God. It could not be from any other; for it is such as no other being than God could devise and execute.

And is it not worthy of God? Does it not so show both the righteousness and the love

of God as to carry with it proof of being from God? Does it not so uphold the strength and majesty of God's law as to present a very powerful reason for believing it comes from the author of the law? It unites justice, which the law ordains, with mercy, which the law does not provide, and makes them harmonize in the salvation of men, each shining the more brightly for its union with the other.

To my own mind this view of the gospel shows it to be from God. It is the common view of it as setting forth the plan of salvation for sinful men, maintaining and even exalting the authority and the force of the law, while it promises freely everlasting life to every one that believeth in Jesus Christ. And this plan, accomplished by the coming of the Son of God on earth as a man, he being at once God and man, entering into our condition here in all things except sin, living with us, suffering and dying for us, that we might live for ever, and never die as we deserve for our sins, he thus honoring the law of right, under which God made us to live, and bringing those who re-

ceive him for their Saviour to love and honor it, — this plan of salvation must be from God.

As the excellency of the law proves it to be from God, so the excellency of this plan of salvation, upholding the law and illustrating its goodness, while it shows, beyond the law, the love and tender kindness of God, his unspeakable love and mercy to the wicked, proves it to be from God. And so the preaching of it becomes the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

The plain story is told. God sent his well-beloved Son into the world to save sinners. Jesus came and lived and taught and wrought miracles, was hated, falsely accused, condemned, finally suffered and died on the cross for sinful men, himself without fault. Therefore, say his disciples, Repent of your sins, and believe in Jesus; for so you may be saved; and there is no other Saviour. You must perish if you do not receive him. He only can take away the penalty of God's broken law. He died for you, that you may live. He, all pure and perfect, all glorious in the holiness

and the love of God, showing the world the fullness of God's perfection as it was never otherwise shown, died on the cross for us, that we sinners might be freely pardoned and saved.

Trust him, and he takes away from you the sentence of the law. Trust him, and he gives you everlasting life. Give to him your heart, and he gives to you the full benefits of his life and death. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He endured the cross, despising the shame. And there is now no condemnation to them that believe in him. Those who commit the keeping of their souls to him he will present before God free from any charge of sin. He answers for them; and it is by him that God will judge the world in righteousness. There can be no higher authority. There can be no surer promise. It is enough. God requires no more. The sinner needs no more. Truly, now, as the psalmist said, and in a fullness of sense with which even he could not say it, unless by prophetic anticipation, "Mercy and

truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

How significant and wonderful is the language of the prophetic fifty-third chapter of Isaiah! "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; . . . and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." This is indeed won-

derful language in its fitness to describe the suffering Saviour, who lived and died seven hundred years after it was written.

And not less wonderful are some of the expressions in the New Testament based on the truth that Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth, showing in that truth a depth of meaning and a reach of influence far beyond our comprehension. Take for example the language used in the Epistle to the Ephesians, second and third chapters. Only a few of the expressions can be given here. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. . . . But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . For through him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access

by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. . . . For I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and hight, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

Such language is wonderful. If we do not take in at once the fullness of its meaning, we can take in a part; and we can see that there

is more in it which we may hope to understand hereafter. In the ages to come we may expect, if now we are brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, to know, far more than is possible for us in the flesh, the breadth, length, depth, and hight of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." — Prov. xxv. 2.

THE glory of God is manifested in what he reveals. If he revealed nothing of himself and his ways we could know nothing of his glory. Without light nothing can be seen.

But darkness also shows by contrast the things on which the light shines. Nothing so displays the splendor of the sun as the clouds, which partially obscure his rays, and at the same time exhibit the variety and brilliancy of his colors, so as no painter on earth can paint them. Polished gold and precious stones, in all their variety of richest hues, can not so charm the eye as the western cloud of setting

day, which conceals the dazzling brightness of the sun.

So the glory of God is best seen through the many concealments with which he surrounds himself. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." This is not the only expression of the same truth. The familiar words, "Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne," are another. And there are many besides.

There is a class of objections to the Bible as a revelation from God, to which I think the proverb repeated gives the best answer, and one that should relieve our minds of much difficulty.

1. One such objection comes in this question: WHY DID NOT GOD GIVE A REVELATION TO MEN SOONER? Why did he wait so long after the creation of man, some two thousand four hundred years, before he revealed his law? And why did he wait so long, some sixteen hundred years, after he revealed the law, before he made known the gospel? Surely there was need of the law sooner. We can see no reason

why so many generations were allowed to pass away without the knowledge of it. Nor can we see any necessity for so long a time after the law was given before Christ came. To us there seems no need of such delay. On the contrary, there seems great loss by it. Many souls who desired to see the day of Christ died without the sight. And many more had no such desires awakened, when, if Christ had been revealed to them, they might have received him.

Then, further, why was he revealed to so few at first? Why was his manifestation so obscurely made? Why did God, if he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, set him forth at first only to a few unknown, unlearned, and uninfluential men? And why was there no great, unquestionable proclamation of his divine commission and divine authority? Why was not the attention of the world so challenged that men would immediately receive him in his true character? Especially may it be asked, Why was there not such convincing evidence that neither then nor since could men raise a

question whether Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world?

The full answer to all questions of this kind is concealed from the knowledge of men. We do not know enough to explain the matter. God in his wisdom did not consult our judgment as to the best way and time for making his revelation to the world. He took methods which are open to many questions, and leave men's minds often sorely perplexed with difficulties and mysteries, which sometimes allow objections to be raised that no man can easily remove. Indeed, it may be doubted whether any one can remove all the objections that may be raised against the Bible as a revelation from God. It would be presumptuous to say, in our limited knowledge and understanding, that all of them can be removed.

Doubtless God had good reasons for delaying so long the revelation of his written word, and for the long interval between the giving of the law and the giving of the gospel, and for sending Jesus Christ in a manner so obscure and little observed, and for withholding

such evidence as would have compelled the assent of all men to his divine mission and divine character.

And there is like reason to wonder at the slow progress of Christianity since Christ came. Why does not he who gave it to the world for salvation make it more rapidly and completely effectual? Who can tell?

On all these questions the cloud of concealment hides the clear light from our eyes. Yet through and around this cloud there shine such rays of various and brilliant colors as ought to fill our minds with admiration of his glory. In contrast with the darkness of heathenism spreading over the world in those long intervals of time, what a great and wonderful light was that which came by Moses in the revelation through him to the world! So far as we moderns know, Egypt was at that period raised to the highest place among the nations in civilization, in scientific and intellectual culture. Before Greece, the land of Homer and Solon, of Socrates and Pericles, had a name in the world, Egypt held the first rank. But the

tyranny of Egypt's king over the enslaved Israelites was broken by a series of wonderful judgments from God, in which his glory shone out the more brightly for all the darkness of surrounding idolatry.

Then, too, the law from Sinai, with its thunderings and lightnings, flashed upon the clouded world a light that has never since gone out, and never will. The brightness of those two stone tables, on which the ten commandments were written, shines out the more wonderfully for the deep darkness which enshrouded the whole earth at that period, and so much the more displays the glory of God.

And so through the whole history of the Israelites, the interpositions of God by his providence, and his revelations by the prophets, the reproofs, instructions, and warnings he gives, and the expressions of his long-suffering and tender mercy, shine out the more brightly and gloriously in the darkness of surrounding heathenism, and the lesser darkness of the perverse, though highly favored, peculiar people. Afterward, when Christ came, the ob-

scurity and poverty of his condition, the commonness of his associates, the small attention he received at first, and later the fierce, malignant opposition he encountered, and at last the falsehood and mockery of his trial and the death of ignominy and agony, all contrast wonderfully with the purity and truth, the simplicity and wisdom and energy of his words and his life, with his miraculous works, with his claims of divine authority and power, with his resurrection after death and his triumphant ascension from the earth.

From his coming until now, the progress and influence of the gospel in the midst of the indifference and the opposition it has encountered,—overcoming persecution, living through corruption, ever blessing the world, debased and darkened by wickedness and ignorance, with its light of love and truth,—are so brightly marked in shining through the thick darkness of many ages, that, if our own minds are not utterly blinded by sin, we must see in it through all its course the shining forth of God's glory.

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.

The very darkness and wickedness which oppose the full brightness and power of the gospel, when you look into its truth and love, and mark its blessed influence, show forth in it the glory of God.

2. THERE IS MUCH DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ABOUT THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE. And this is sometimes made an objection to it as a revelation from God. Men say, "There are so many different ways of understanding and explaining the Bible that we do not know what it means. Surely, if God should speak to us he would not speak so uncertainly. We might as well have no revelation as have one that can not be understood. But no two persons agree entirely about the meaning of the Bible; and many who have studied it give opposite, contradictory statements and explanations of its teachings. How then can it tell us the truth of God?"

This is the matter of fact as we see it. There are these differences. I do not think I have represented them in the mouth of the ob-

jector too strongly. And how is this objection to be answered?

There are minor differences which are not material, and do not hinder men from receiving the Bible as the word of God, any more than differences of appetite and taste hinder men from eating their dinner at the same table. Such differences are surely no valid objection to the truth and authority of the Bible. It is indeed an argument in its favor, that many, having independent views and opinions concerning its meaning, agree substantially in receiving it as the word of God.

But there are also differences which are not small, which in fact amount to opposition, and on essential points can not possibly be reconciled. It may relieve the difficulty in some degree to consider that the same thing occurs with regard to the best and most precious productions of human wisdom. We have a very notable example of it in the constitution of our government. Some influential characters have long, if not from the very beginning, held the State, in its reserved claims, to be above the

United States. And they have carried out this opinion in the attempted separation of some States from the nation. It was a political heresy and a practical absurdity, most mischievous and ruinous in its effects. Yet by it the leaders of rebellion sought to justify their destructive course of conduct in throwing off the national government as if it had no rightful national authority. They have followed their error to their own destruction. So men sometimes misinterpret the Bible, and follow their error to their own destruction.

Nevertheless, the truth will stand; and the destructive consequences of error show the beauty and force of truth more clearly by the contrast, and by its salutary effects. Those who misunderstand and falsely explain the Bible perish because they turn aside from its true sense. But those who read it aright and obey it live.

3. It is a third objection, that the Bible doctrine concerning the mode of God's existence has in it MYSTERY AND APPARENT CONTRADICTION. The common statement of the

doctrine is, that the Bible represents God as existing in three persons; and that these three persons, called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are one God. And often it is said that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God. The objector says, "This makes three Gods and one God. The doctrine is contradictory and absurd."

The reply is, This Bible doctrine concerning God is a great mystery; but there is no contradiction nor absurdity in it. There is one God, who exists in three persons. This use of the word persons does not mean that there are three distinct beings, as the common use of it might imply, but expresses a threefold distinction in the one God. He is one and he is three, but not in the same sense both one and three. We hold fast to the truth that there is but one God, as the teaching of the Bible. But because we think the Bible teaches that the Son does the works of God and is God, and that the Holy Spirit also is God we think that the one God is in some way three. We do not say how. And this threeness we

call three persons. We do not deny that there is mystery, something obscure which we can not explain, in any statement or representation we can make about it.

But then it seems to us there is mystery, something obscure which we can not explain, about any ideas we can form of God as an Infinite Spirit. What can we know of a pure spirit, except that it is like that in us which thinks and feels, and hopes and fears, and rejoices and sorrows, and judges and chooses and wills? How can we think of God as a Spirit, except that he is like the spirit in man, only pure, without fault, and exalted or enlarged beyond any limit?

And then we are lost in mystery. We can not take into our minds the idea of an infinite being, or anything infinite. We can say that God has almighty power, is always and everywhere present, is perfectly good, is infinite in his love and mercy and truth and justice and grace. But all this infinity we can not comprehend. We know very little about it. It is so far above the comprehension of our minds that we

may truly say, God, great and glorious and just and good as he must be, is the most mysterious being that exists. He dwells in so great mystery, from his being the Infinite Spirit, that we can see clearly but little about him, and really all our knowledge of him takes in but a very small part of his immeasurable being. So it is because he is infinite. Yet if he were not infinite he would not be God.

Here comes in the glory of the Bible doctrine, that God was in Christ. This, too, is a mystery, that Christ, being a man, should be also God; that as the Son of man he should be of the same human nature with us, and as the Son of God he should be of the same divine nature with the Father. But, receiving it for truth, however mysterious, we come to more knowledge of God than we can get in any other way. Jesus Christ was a man and lived on earth. And if he was also God, then in knowing him we know God. It is the glory of this mystery that Jesus Christ reveals God to the world. He shows the power and truth and love and justice and grace of God far more

than the Infinite One has otherwise revealed himself to us. Out of the mystery of his being, as the infinite Spirit, God shines upon us and speaks to us in Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person. The cloud, which always to us covers the face of the Almighty and Infinite One, is broken, and the true glory shines through in Jesus Christ his Son. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

4. Another objection to the Bible is ITS DOCTRINE OF NATIVE DEPRAVITY. Men are born to be sinners; born so that they certainly will sin. The objector says, "This seems a harsh, severe arrangement; and anything like it made by men would be regarded as unfair, unjust. It is then unworthy of God."

To this it must be replied, that possibly God may do some things which men have neither

the right nor the power to do. He is so far above us that we can not always judge what is right for him to do. Men in private life can not always judge what is right for those in high public office to do. They have not sufficient knowledge. Much less can we always judge wisely of God's ways.

Besides, it is a fact, as plain as that there is a difference between right and wrong, that sin is in the world, as men are, by nature. The fact does not come to us from the Bible alone. It is seen everywhere, with or without the Bible.

But the Bible takes the facts as they are; it tells us some things about the introduction of sin, and reveals the way of salvation from sin and death. So it reveals in some measure the dark and terrible facts of our condition in the world, though it does not explain them.

5. An objection to the Bible is sometimes made from ITS DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. The objector says, "That a large part of mankind should have been made to perish for ever seems utterly inconsistent with the

goodness of the Almighty. Since God is almighty, he has power to save all men. And since he is infinite in benevolence, he must be disposed to save all men." This argument for Universalism is short, plain, and forcible. But most people who read and think find it quite contrary to the teachings of the Bible. To them this book says plainly and undeniably, "The wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." So, if they will not believe this doctrine, they can not believe the Bible.

Now the real difficulty in this matter lies farther back than the Bible. It is in the mystery of iniquity. Whence came evil, sin, in the world? Since God is almighty, he must have power to prevent it. And since he is infinitely good, he must have chosen to prevent it. So it seems perfectly proved that evil can not be in God's world. And yet here it is. There is no denying the fact. And the mystery of the fact is as great without the Bible as with it. Rejecting the Bible does not help

the difficulty. And it must be confessed that believing the Bible does not remove it. The mystery of sin and misery in the world is not explained by the Bible.

But something better is done. A remedy for these greatest and saddest mysteries of God's creation and government of the world is proclaimed. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and died on the cross for the sins of men, that all may be saved who will believe in him. This is a remedy for sin in the world that proves effectual in every instance of fair trial, and fails of universal effect only for the want of proper use. Thus, though the Bible does not remove the mystery of sin and its consequences, there shines through it, upon this deepest darkness of the world, the light of love and salvation from the throne of God.

But here the same difficulty arises in another form. The objector may say, "How can God desire to save all men, when he does not design to do so? As he has all power, why can he not do what he desires? How is he true

and earnest in his plan of salvation, when he does not make it effectual for all?

I do not know that I can answer this question. But so far as I can give answer, it is this: God does not desire the death of the wicked. He is true and earnest in his desire and plan to save. All we know of him shows that this must be. But while his plan is sufficient for all, and he earnestly desires it to be effectual, for some reasons not explained to us he does not save all by it. Many choose to continue in their ways of sin; and so continuing, they can not be saved. God does not compel them to turn from their sin and be saved.

It has been suggested that perhaps the freedom of men to do as they choose forbids God to do more than he does for their salvation; that if he should do more than he does it would break up the system of free agency and personal responsibility, in which he made men to live.

We can not see that this would be the fact, and still it may be for aught we know.

Yet certainly he does not desire the death of any, but that all may live. His purpose is declared plainly, — to save all who will come to him by Jesus Christ. Plainly, and with earnest desire, he offers salvation to all, with the assurance, "He that believeth in Jesus shall be saved." And no one of all the perishing wicked can say it is God's fault that he does not believe unto salvation.

Now let us consider what would be the condition of men without the Bible, as to a knowledge of a future life. They might look forward with some reasonable hope or expectation of a life to come. Many, doubtless, would have the belief of a future life; but certain knowledge of it we could not have. Then what should we expect that life will be? Here we see that many destroy their happiness, their character, all the good they might have in life, by their wickedness. They are ruined beyond recovery. There is absolutely no hope for them in this world. Others, on the contrary, secure honor, comfort, prosperity, all the good allowed to men on the earth, by the ex-

cellence of their life. These are matters of common observation, the teachings of observation and experience.

And yet in the experience of this life it is by no means uniform that the righteous are blessed in their righteousness, and the wicked cursed in their wickedness. Sometimes the ways of the wicked prosper, and the ways of the righteous are filled with trouble and sorrow. Indeed, there are instances in which some of the best people experience so much affliction that almost the only joy or comfort they have seems to arise from the consciousness of trying to do right, and from their confidence in God, and their hope for the life to come.

There are also many examples of those who have lived wickedly turning into a new and good life.

By the force of conscience, and reason likewise, the impression is fastened upon most minds that there must be an essential connection between the life here and the life here-

after, and that men will be rewarded according to their deeds.

The Bible comes in then to speak with authority and certainty of the future existence. It assumes the truth of the impression that the life to come has an essential connection with our present life. It declares expressly that those who do good shall be blessed with everlasting life, and those who do evil shall be condemned to everlasting death. And since all have sinned, it offers the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation freely to all, through Christ, assuring those who believe, that they shall be saved, and those who do not believe, that they shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Thus the Bible agrees with the course of God's providence, and with the impressions arising from the force of conscience and reason; and it goes beyond, bringing distinctly into view the retributions of eternity, with the free offer of eternal life. Is there anything in this doctrine of revelation to make us reasonably question the divine authority of the Bible?

If men continue to do evil they will perish in their sin. So it is in this world; and so the Bible says it will be in the life to come.

Some of the chief objections made to the Bible have now been considered. And it really seems to me that, if we look at them rightly, they are arguments in its favor rather than against it. There are mysteries in it, as in everything which relates to the Infinite One. God, as infinite, must be surrounded with mysteries. But the light shines through the clouds, and over them. It is the true light spreading over the darkness of the world. By it the Sun of Righteousness arises and shines with healing in his beams. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God speaks plainly to us all who have the Bible, as he spoke by Moses to the Israelites: "See; I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil." In the Bible at large he speaks to men as if he were addressing every one personally: "I call heaven and

earth to record this day against you, that I have set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life."

CHAPTER XVII.

INSPIRATION.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." — 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

THE arguments which I have presented in the successive chapters of this volume, for Christianity as a revelation from God, and therefore the only true religion, have, I hope, appeared conclusive to those who have given them careful and candid attention. In drawing near the end of such a course of arguments, the subject of the Inspiration of the Bible reasonably claims attention.

The inspiration of the Scriptures is a topic on which I have thought much, and have not always found it easy to satisfy my own mind what is the exact truth. There are however some things which seem to me sufficiently

plain; and these plain things seem also to me enough for all the practical uses of the Christian and the honest inquirer for Christian truth. To these points relating to this important subject I ask your attention in this chapter, in the hope that you will judge of them truly and rightly.

1. A special revelation from God NEEDS AND IMPLIES A SPECIAL INSPIRATION BY GOD in the writers who give us the records of it.

Of course I assume in this proposition that the revelation is written. A revelation that is not written has in it nothing permanent. It exists only in the fallible memory of the short-lived man or men to whom it is given. To continue, it must be written. And to be written correctly, as God gives it, so that others beside those who first receive it may know what it is, and especially so that those of later times may know what it is, the writers must be guided by God, so as to give the world just the words which he gave them for the world. Thus there must be a special inspiration by God, in order that the special revelation from

God may be made widely known to the world, and preserved for the people of coming time.

This would be undeniably the fact, if the revelation were made all at once. But as God has chosen the method of revealing his will to men, it does not come at once. It comes in successive parts, during a long period of time, through many individual minds. It comes in the history, teachings, and discipline of a peculiar people, chosen of God, through all their growth from small beginnings to maturity, through all their progress, decline, and corruption, till they lost their nationality, though still existing as a distinct race, scattered among all nations. And then the completion of it comes in the history of the life, teachings, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and in the instructions concerning him by his early disciples.

Now it is plain that Moses, in all he wrote as a revealer of God's truth, must have written under the inspiration of the omniscient One, in order that what he said might be in agreement with what was to come afterward. And

the same is true of Samuel and David and all the prophets. Each, in his own portion of the complete work of revelation, must have been guided and especially inspired, that he might fill up aright the part given him to do. So that the evidence of a revelation necessarily carries along with it the evidence of inspiration granted to those through whom the revelation is given to the world. The proof of revelation is proof of inspiration as well.

This argument is, to my mind, so plain and conclusive, that, if there were no other, I think we ought to consider the question settled as to the principal portions of the Scriptures. But there are other conclusive evidences to the same purpose.

2. JESUS HIMSELF ALWAYS REFERRED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES AS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY. He did this just as we, who now believe the inspiration of the Bible, refer to it as the word of God. In this respect preachers of the gospel and Christian writers follow his example more exactly than they do in anything else. And as we refer so confi-

dently to the Bible because we believe its inspiration, so we must believe that he referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, all that were then written, so confidently, because he believed their inspiration. I can see no other reasonable conclusion from his conduct in this matter. Consequently, as we accept him for authority, we ought to receive the Old Testament Scriptures as he did, for an inspired and infallible guide in matters of religious truth and duty. This seems certain so far as regards the Old Testament. Concerning the New Testament there is less frequent doubt with regard to its inspired authority. And there is also a similar reason for believing its inspiration.

3. It is THE PROMISE OF OUR SAVIOUR TO HIS DISCIPLES. I mean the promise he gave them that the Spirit of truth should lead and teach them, and bring to their remembrance the things concerning him.

In the fourteenth chapter of John, at the twenty-sixth verse, he says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the

Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Again, at the end of the next chapter: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." Then in the sixteenth chapter: "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

These promises cover the whole ground of what the apostles and first disciples would need that they might teach fully and fitly the truth concerning Christ. They leave out nothing which was necessary for this purpose. Of

necessity, then, they include the gift of divine inspiration. Without this they could not so call up in remembrance all the things which he had said to them as he promised that they should. Without this they could not so be taught all things concerning him, and be guided into all truth, and bear witness of him before all men, as there would be need. Surely, then, these promises of the Spirit include the promise of inspiration. They had need to be divinely guided in the records they made of his life and teachings and wonderful works and sufferings and death and resurrection. They had need to be divinely instructed in their understanding and reasonings and teachings about his life and work and death. Only so could they worthily bear witness of him to all the world for all time.

4. We come now to the explicit declaration, "ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

If here *all Scripture* means what we naturally understand by the words, and if this declaration is then to be taken as it is most readily understood, the question is fully settled. In relation to the meaning of the words, "All Scripture," it may indeed be said that there are portions of the Scriptures which were not written till after this declaration was made. Yet only small portions were written afterward. This second Epistle to Timothy, which contains the declaration, was certainly one of the later of Paul's writings, if not the latest. There is no other to which a later date seems applicable. It was written when he was a prisoner at Rome, after he had once been called to answer before the emperor, or some officer sitting in judgment for the emperor. In the same letter he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and

not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This is the language of one who saw the end of his course near, and triumphed in the anticipation of it. And it is not likely that he was mistaken.

It was in all probability before this that Peter wrote the direction, "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [turn aside from their true meaning], as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

It is worthy of special notice that here the writings of Paul are put by Peter along with the other Scriptures as of the same authority. And so I conclude that all the writings of the New Testament, which were put together by the early Christians as alike worthy of confidence, alike speaking with the authority of God and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,

are to be received by us as the Jews and our Saviour received the Old Testament Scriptures. And I suppose that the text applies to them all alike, and is true in relation to them all.

The writings of the apostle John were some of them, perhaps all, of a later date than the text. But they were received with the rest by the early Christians; they are generally admitted to have been written by the beloved disciple whose name they bear; and they have, to the serious and thoughtful reader, special marks of proceeding from the Spirit of truth.

I accept then the language of the declaration, as reasonable and true in relation to all those writings which, as they are gathered into one book, we call the Bible.

This now is the sum of my argument for the Scriptures: The very nature of a revelation from God requires that the men by whom it comes should be inspired for its publication, preservation, and transmission; our Saviour recognized inspiration in the Old Testament; his promises insured it to his disciples, as

teachers of his truth; and the apostles Paul and Peter speak expressly as if all the Scriptures were distinguished from other writings of men by this divine quality.

And this distinction is strongly confirmed by the great contrast there is between these writings and those called Apocryphas. There is an Apocrypha of the Old Testament, and one of the New. And the language, matter, and manner of them both are in general very different from the genuine Scriptures. For the most part they are like the triflings of childhood in comparison with the serious work of mature men.

Some will naturally ask, WHAT IS THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION? How far does it insure infallible instruction to men?

To such questions I answer, that I can not say exactly how the writers of the Bible were inspired, and in what degree, for I do not know. I have not the knowledge to speak definitely and positively in relation to this matter.

But certainly it seems to me that they were

so far inspired as to make their writings a sufficient and sure guide in the way of truth and right, as to religion and morals. With the Bible in his hands, no man needs to err in anything pertaining to these most important matters. It was not given to be especially our guide in other things. And if there may be found difficulties, inaccuracies, or even errors with regard to other things, — I do not say that such is the fact, but *if* it be, — the divine authority of the Scriptures is not impaired as to religion and morals. They are sufficient for the purpose for which they are given, to guide men into the knowledge of God and the way of salvation. They are not sufficient for all other things. And it would be folly to pretend that they are.

The Scriptures are not an infallible guide to those who do not honestly seek to be guided. Men may err in understanding them. It is possible, and not very difficult, to misunderstand and pervert their meaning. The heedless and the perverse may, whether learned or unlearned, wrest them, turn them away from the

proper sense, to their own destruction. God has never promised that his word shall be a sufficient guide for those who do not come to it for guidance, or fairly and earnestly seek its instruction. Those who form their opinions beforehand, and then come to the Bible to find support for them, if their opinions are wrong, will be very likely to get arguments for them, and to be confirmed in their errors. The Bible is not in such a sense the touchstone of truth as necessarily to draw out of a man's mind all the errors he has in it. It is very common for men to find in this book the views and opinions which they seek to find. If they seek to find *the truth*, as God teaches it, honestly and earnestly asking him to guide them, ready to obey the truth when they find it, and striving to obey it as they find it, they will be instructed aright. For the Bible is a sufficient rule to those who rightly use it. But it is not sufficient for those who fail to use it rightly. Whether they fail by neglect, by disinclination or misinclination, by pride or prejudice, or by whatever is wrong in their state of mind, it

will not be to them a sufficient guide. But he who searches for the truth truly, and with all his heart, will find the Bible indeed the word of truth and the word of life, the word of God.

Does the inspiration of the Bible extend to *the words used?* Certainly, in some sense it must. The words of the Scriptures are the vehicle by which the sense is conveyed into the minds of the readers. There is no other vehicle but words, which can convey the precious freight of God's truth and love into the human mind. As the Bible is the great repository of this precious freight, and it is stored in the words of the book for constant use, to be taken into his mind by every one who will take it, we can not say that the words have nothing to do with the truth and love which they hold and communicate.

But do you ask, *Would other words do as well as those which are used?* That is a question which I can not answer. Another person may ask, If different words would have been as well, why were they not chosen? And this question I can not answer. Happily it is

not necessary to answer either of these questions, nor others like them.

The inspiration of the Bible did not hinder, but guided rather the writers in their choice of the words which they preferred. It did not hinder, but helped rather the free use of their diversities of gifts and attainments. Moses and David and Isaiah, Paul and Peter and John, wrote in very different styles. And if they presented the same truth, it was in very different modes of expression. But they all give doubtless just the revelation which God intended.

It is a principle most important to be kept in mind, that the inspiration of the Scriptures does not relieve men from responsibility in seeking the truth and love of God brought to us in the Bible. It increases their responsibility in this respect. As the Bible is an inspired book, so much the more ought men to search the Scriptures, and pray for the Spirit of truth, and be honest with themselves before God, that they may know the truth and be

free from error and sin, that they may find the way of life and live in following it.

In a most important sense the Bible is an infallible guide. It will never lead astray, but will always lead aright every one who makes a full and right use of it. The learned and the unlearned may be led by it surely in the way of life.

But there is also a most important sense in which there is no infallible guide. Any one who does not seek, and any one who does not seek aright, has no promise that he will find the truth, or the way of life. There are men whose minds are so full of error that they will not see the truth when it is set before them. And there are men whose hearts are so full of sin that they will not obey the truth when they know it. For such there is no infallible guide. They will never know the truth and obey it unto salvation until they repent of their sin by confessing and forsaking it, and search the Scriptures with a true heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OPPOSITIONS OF SCIENCE.

"Oppositions of science falsely so called." — 1 Tim. vi. 20.

THE most imposing objections to the truth of Christianity and its divine authority are made by men of science, or by those who claim to be men of science. Such objections are adapted to have very considerable influence with some who are engaged in scientific pursuits, and with many who are not so engaged, because they have the appearance of scientific authority. For this reason they must receive some consideration. The Christian need have no fear of them; for they can be fairly answered, or reasonably set aside. But they must receive candid attention, as fully as they deserve, in order that they may be rightly put out of the way.

It must be acknowledged that the progress of science has, in some instances, required Christians to change their manner of understanding the language of the Bible. The science of *astronomy*, when its principles came to be known, required that the Bible should be understood as men understand the language of common life, as giving expression to the appearances that meet us everywhere, and not as the words of scientific accuracy, expressing exactly the laws and causes of those phenomena. At the time when astronomical science was coming into its full form and substance, many who stood high as Christians and theologians were greatly agitated with fear lest the truth and divine authority of the Bible should be overthrown by the new discoveries of science. There has probably never been greater anxiety in relation to the oppositions of science to the truth of Christianity than there was about two hundred and fifty years ago, at the time Galileo argued and proved that the earth moves around the sun, and does not stand still on its firm foundations. It took many years

for the Christian world to become settled in the perfect agreement between the Bible, understood according to the common use of language, and the true science of astronomy. But now it seems to us very strange that any difficulty of this sort should have arisen, so perfectly needless it appears.

The science of *geology*, more recent than astronomy, requires that we acknowledge the earth to have been created long before it became the habitation of man. This does not conflict with anything expressly said in the Bible account of the creation. It is not said that the earth was created six thousand years ago, and was immediately arranged substantially as it is now; and that then man was created upon it. It is not said that the whole work of creation, from the beginning to the end, occupied six days of our common time, and no more. Yet such was, no doubt, the common understanding of the narrative in the beginning of the Bible, until geology led men to look at it more carefully, and to see that there may have been a very long period, none

can tell how long, between the creation of the substance of the earth and the completion of the work by the creation of man upon it.

But a little examination of the account, as it is given, shows that those six days of creation were not just like our common days. The statement is, that after the first three days' work, God set the two great lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and that then the evening and the morning were the fourth day. Consequently the first four days of the creation could not have been made as our days are made, by the apparent revolution of the sun around the earth in every twenty-four hours. There must have been some other way in which those days were made. The very narrative by itself requires that we understand by the six days of creation other periods of time than our common days.

And this being the fact, I do not think it a strange thing that many Christian geologists have adopted the opinion that those six days

were long periods of time, in which the great changes and progressive works of creation related in that short chapter were accomplished. In so very brief an account it was a matter of necessity that many things should be left without explanation. It could not be otherwise. There could be, in so short a space, no detailed statement of the manner in which so great events occurred, but only the barest outline.

It is, however, a remarkable fact, that the order of the creation, so far as it is ascertained by the science of geology, agrees with the order given in the Bible.

First the substance of the earth was in a chaotic condition, well expressed by the words without form and void. Then it was brought into some order by its elements being distinguished so as to occupy their appropriate places. Next came the vegetable world; afterward the animal world; and lastly man was created, as if all the works before had been a preparation for him. Such is the order of geology; and such is the order of the Bible. How came this to be so? If God instructed

Moses, we can see how it came. But if not, how? Can any one tell? Will any man of science, who rejects the Bible as giving us a revelation from God, explain this remarkable agreement?

It may indeed be said that some facts have been lately reported, which indicate that the existence of man goes farther back than has been generally believed, and farther than the Bible implies. Some such facts have been reported; but they have also been disputed. They are not ascertained to be facts. And neither true science nor the Bible can be affected by them until the truth concerning them is known. Those who wished to disbelieve the Bible have more than once supposed some facts to be discovered quite inconsistent with it. But they have been found mistaken; and the Book of books stands not less firmly established after a thorough examination of all such supposed discoveries. It can not be shaken by any reports which are not thoroughly verified.

There are certain opinions or theories set before the world by some men of science,

which are at variance with the Bible, and so opposed to its being received as a revelation from God. I can not help thinking that they are in truth oppositions of science falsely so called. One of them has been named the "*Development theory.*" It has been proposed by some men of science to explain the existence of men and animals without regarding them as produced by God's direct agency in creation. The peculiarity of this theory is the supposition that there has been going on in the world, through unnumbered ages of past time, a process of development, or a progressive advancement from the lowest forms of life to the highest. I do not know that these professed philosophers pretend to say how life itself began. But in consistency with their theory it must have been developed, in some of its lowest forms, from no life; some very low kind of vegetation from no seed, and some very low kind of animal life from no animal life. And certainly this plain statement of the theory looks very much like making something

out of nothing, — an event which seems to be a creation, and to imply or require a creator.

It is a truth of science that there is in the vegetable world a gradation of life from the lowest forms, the mosses, lichens, and the like, up to the largest trees and the most luxuriant, beautiful, and useful plants; and also that in the animal world there is a gradation of life from the lowest forms, such as the snail-like creature that adheres to the rock and has never the power of locomotion, up to the most powerful, intelligent, beautiful, and useful animals existing, such as the horse, the dog, the elephant, the lion; or, among birds, the eagle, the parrot, and the mocking-bird.

Now the development theory suggests that there may have been a progressive advancement toward the highest form of animal life; and that so man may have come to be, by a very long and gradual process of development, what he is. I do not know that it is expressly said, but it seems to be implied, that man may have been developed from the gorilla, or the orang-outang, or the monkey.

This theory is in opposition to the Bible account, that man was created by God and in the likeness of God. But is it any more reasonable than the Bible account, or as reasonable? It is a theory only, a supposition, a conjecture. It is not supported by the facts observed and classified in natural science. According to these facts there is no passing from one species of animals to another and higher species. And there never has been. Geology has discovered in the great repository of the rocks many specimens of diverse species of animals which have existed and passed away in former periods; but not one specimen has ever been found of intermediate or transition animals growing from one species into another. The nearest example known of the development of one species from another, or from others, is the mule, which results from the union of the ass and the horse. But in this instance there is no propagation of a new species; for the mule has no offspring. And this established fact goes farther against the theory than any facts known go for it.

The truth is, there is a development of man from helpless infancy to the strength and completeness of maturity, and also from the lowest barbarism to the highest civilization and culture. This is a development which is going on so as to be the subject of observation in the world. But no development of man from any other animal has ever been known. The theory is simply an "opposition of science falsely so called." It can not be more truly named. It is nothing but a theory, a supposition, put forth by men claiming to be adepts in science. It eminently shows that sometimes much learning does not save men from very foolish opinions, which have no support from the facts and principles of true science.

One of the most distinguished among living men of science, and especially of natural science, is Agassiz. He is a native of Switzerland, of French descent, and now an American citizen, and an eminent professor in the oldest and most richly endowed literary institution of our land. He rejects utterly the development theory as groundless. But he sets

forth another theory respecting the origin and unity of the human race, which is not consistent with the Bible account of man's creation. He believes, if I am rightly informed, that there have been several distinct creations of men; that as there are different kinds of fishes, so there are different kinds of men. He thinks that the Esquimaux and the American Indian and the Negro and the Chinaman and the European and American white man are of different stocks in their creation, that they were created distinctly, and so are different; while they are all human, all men, having the peculiarities of manhood separating them widely from all other animals. He thinks the differences among them are not to be explained by their different circumstances and modes of living.

Now, I do not know that I can disprove this theory of one of the most eminent scientists of the present day. Neither do I know that he can prove it. There are, doubtless, some facts which favor his opinion, or he would not have adopted it. But it is a reasonable question

whether the facts are such as to set aside the Bible account of the matter. It may be that he undervalues the power of circumstances and modes of living, and all the diversities of condition. Take several infants from the most cultivated families in Europe and America, and separate them, placing one in China, one in Africa, one among the American Indians, leaving others in their native condition, all to grow up in their diverse circumstances and modes of living; and there will result such differences, in twenty-five years, between those having the same parentage, as will astonish an observer. There will be also a surprising likeness of each individual to the people among whom his life has been developed. Read the story of Kaspar Hauser, and see how wonderful and powerful was the effect of entire seclusion, and restriction to one mode of exercise, from infancy to the approach of manhood.

In view of such facts as the history of humanity gives us, it seems to me quite reasonable to suppose that Prof. Agassiz under-estimates the influence on mankind of the great

diversities in the circumstances, modes of life, and forms of development, among men ever since the confusion of Babel. And looking at the matter simply as a question of science, it is quite as probable that all mankind are derived from one stock, the different families being very diversely developed, as that God has created several distinct families of the one human race. If one creation could have produced the whole, science asks, why should we suppose there was more than one?

While the development theory makes too much of the influence resulting from external circumstances and modes of life, or physical causes, Prof. Agassiz makes too little of it. True philosophy, coming between the two, instructs us to take the Bible account concerning the origin of man as correct. Certainly the abundant evidences for the Bible, as giving us a revelation from God, are not to be set aside by such theories.

And in fact they do not touch directly any of the essential evidences for the truth of the Christian religion. They stand in opposition

to the Bible statements concerning the creation of man; and thus indirectly they are opposed to the teachings of the Bible in relation to man's character and the way of salvation.

But when Christianity comes to us as a cure for the fear of death, and for the condemnation and the power of sin, proved by actual experiment as really as any experimental science is proved by the trials to which it is subjected, it ought to be received. And no theories depending on facts but partially observed, and but partially within the reach of observation, where more is supposed than known, have really any force against it. Their force, if they have any, is not against Christianity itself, but against the perfect correctness in all things of the book in which Christianity is revealed to us. It is directly against the infallible authority of the Bible. In that way it is against Christianity.

But possibly the truth of Christianity can be maintained, if the infallible authority of the Bible, in matters not essentially a part of the Christian religion, is not preserved. And

whether it can be or not, theories of learned and able men so unsupported, or but partially supported by facts, are not of sufficient force to call into reasonable question the plain statements of the Bible. It is better supported by evidence than those theories are, and better than it is likely they ever will be.

I shall not pursue the consideration of the subject farther. No other scientific questions or difficulties with regard to the truth of Christianity have any greater weight than those which we have noticed.

Two or three things worthy of our attention are suggested by what has been said.

1. The scientific theories opposed to Christianity *are not of good moral tendency*. So far as their influence goes they tend to weaken the strength of moral principle and to diminish the moral restraints among men.

The development theory puts God far away from the world. Its natural effect is to make the impression that the world exists and its affairs go on by certain inherent forces, without any present agency and direction of God.

And just so far it removes from men the sense of God's presence to restrain them from evil and uphold them in good. Indeed, the strong bearing of the theory is toward materialism and atheism, and the result must be that there is no teacher of moral right but experience, no moral law but expediency. It has no enforcement from divine authority, no support from divine love. A high tone of morals can not be expected from such a theory.

And the theory of the origin of man from different creations is manifestly against a belief in the universal brotherhood and equal rights of men. It is made use of to uphold slavery, with all the oppressions, wrongs, and vices attending that gigantic system of wickedness. Assuming that the negro is of an inferior nature by creation, it is asked, Why should he not be reduced to slavery and kept there? It has been said a thousand times, That is his place, and he is fit for no other. This is good slaveholding doctrine, but not according to the teaching of the Bible: "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the

face of the earth;" and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

If such theories prevail among men, there will be no high moral sentiment or moral action.

2. Men of science, and others too, sometimes hold theories or opinions *supported by little or no evidence;* while they disregard the various and strong proofs for the truth of Christianity. Some people are very credulous in taking up opinions opposed to the Christian religion, and very skeptical with regard to facts and reasonings in its favor. The fact seems to be that many dislike to believe the truth and immense importance of the Christian religion; though they acknowledge that there are good things in it and good influences flowing from it. This dislike blinds them to the evidence for it, and makes them foolish in disregarding it, when they are wise in other things, and when the proof is abundantly sufficient to convince them and lead them to receive the truth, if they were only reasonable.

And this fact has a very serious aspect for those who, being more intelligent and intellectual than most of their fellow-men, stand aloof from the common religious belief, in doubt, and not giving its evidence the candid and earnest attention it deserves. The plain fact is that the Christian religion is everything to the individual soul and to the world, if it is anything. It is true or false. If true, it is good and necessary for every man, in such a sense that life is lost without it; and if false, it is good for no man. And for any one to say practically, "It is good for other people, and very necessary in the world, but I can do very well without it," is unreasonable, and in the highest degree absurd. Intelligent persons are not doing rightly toward their fellow-men, nor wisely for themselves, until they receive the evidences for the Christian religion, nor indeed until they receive the gospel of Jesus Christ into their hearts to govern their lives.

3. A third suggestion, the last I will make, is, that Christians have *no reason to be disturbed* by the various difficulties and objections raised against their faith. Having become estab-

lished reasonably and firmly in believing the truth of the Christian religion from its goodness, its fitness to their wants, and its many proofs, they should not be troubled by questions which objectors may bring against their faith. Such questions will arise; and you may not be able to answer all of them. But if anything may be regarded by a Christian as settled, it is that the Christian religion is true and is from God. The Master himself teaches that we may not be able to answer all the questions which arise; but, knowing and loving the truth, knowing and loving him, we may trust him, and by our trust in him we may be relieved of all anxiety, all fear.

High attainments in human learning, great human sagacity, and superior excellence in human wisdom, should never be disparaged. But all of them, in the highest degree ever attained among men, can bring no such peace and blessedness to the human soul, and can send abroad in the world no such powerful influence to comfort and bless and save lost men, as faith in Jesus Christ and love to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Lord.

CHAPTER XIX.

RECAPITULATION.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum." — Heb. viii. 1.

I PROPOSE now a review of the preceding chapters, to bring into notice the several topics which have been considered, and to get a little more fully, if we may, the true impression of the whole. I do not propose to make in one chapter an abstract, or condensed statement, of what is contained in more than a dozen. But I can mention the different subjects, and state some of the most important points of the arguments, so as to give a glimpse of the whole in a short space.

The first chapter was on the monumental proofs of Christianity. As there are monuments which stand in proof of the facts in our

national history, such as the granite column on Bunker Hill, the annual observance of the Fourth of July, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and our existence as a nation, so there are monuments to prove the facts of the Christian religion. The Christian era as the point from which we reckon the successive years, the ordinances of the Christian church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Sabbath, the existence of the Christian religion in the world, and the Bible as a common book of religious authority, are such monuments.

The second chapter was on the Bible. In its peculiar form, character, and influence, it is such as man could not and would not have made. Therefore it must have come from God.

The third chapter was on the influence of the Bible and its religion in quickening the intellect, reforming the morals, and blessing the social life of men on earth. This is an argument which ought to have great power with every one who claims to be fair-minded and ready to receive the truth. Either the

Christian religion is from God, or a system of false religion has been the greatest blessing to the world which it has ever received.

Then came the consideration of man's need of a revelation to tell him of God, to guide him in the way of righteousness, and to give him sure hope for the life to come.

This was followed by a glance at the peculiar and wonderful history of Jesus Christ, the strangest fiction or the most important fact ever published to the world.

Christ as a teacher was the next subject. He taught so that men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. The singular purity, kindliness, force, and influence of his words have made him commonly regarded as THE GREAT TEACHER, surpassing the wisest of the philosophers.

Miracles are so numerous and prominent in the Bible, that they must receive attention when we are looking into its claims to be from God. Those wrought by Christ correspond with his wonderful history and character, and also with the salutary and unique power of the

truths of Christianity, when they are received as from God. It is impossible reasonably to set aside or explain away the testimony for miracles. To say that they can not be, or can not be proved, is equal to saying that there is no God, or that he can not reveal himself to men by the direct action of his power.

After the miracles, we considered the authority claimed and exercised by Christ. It was such as no other man ever asserted for himself, and no one could use who did not act with the power of God. Then the sufferings and death of Christ were the subject of our attention; and next, his resurrection from the dead.

The consideration of these various topics presents Christ to us as a being quite out of the sphere of common humanity. We can not in any way reasonably believe him to have been a man and only a man. He must have been more than human. It must be that God was with him. Never man spake like this man. No good man besides ever claimed and exercised authority as he did. Yet he sur-

passed other men in goodness as much as in his high claims. Was he not a divine messenger, yea, a divine being? Could he be any less?

We may wisely regard him as revealing to men the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. In this view of him he shows us what we should think of God; he gives us some definite knowledge about the life to come; not a great amount indeed, but of great importance, and enough for our practical needs; and he shows us how to obtain the pardon of sin from the God of truth and justice. On these topics, which have baffled all philosophical inquiry, he speaks with the freedom of perfect knowledge and perfect authority.

Was he then a fanatical enthusiast, himself deluded, and deluding the world? Or was he a false pretender to knowledge and power which no man ever had? Or was he the Son of God, bringing to light an immortal life, and revealing to the darkened minds of men the truth and love, the power and grace of God? Surely he did bring to men the light of life.

He did show to the world the glory of God, as it never before had been manifested.

The subject of the twelfth chapter was the moral law. In it the tract entitled "Where did he get that Law?" was given. It sets forth, in a short, convincing argument, the perfection of the law proclaimed by Moses, such that no man or body of men could have invented it. It must be that from God came such a law, so far surpassing all the moral ideas then prevalent among the most enlightened people, and itself never surpassed in later times, never likely to be surpassed, or possible to be surpassed, because it is perfect. And the Jewish religion and the Christian religion, which alike have it for their law, must have come from God.

The evidence of prophecy was the next topic. Only a few of the plainest examples were noticed, in which the prophetic declarations of the Old Testament are so fulfilled that there is no room for a reasonable question of their prophetic character.

The substantial connection and unity of the

Old and New Testaments was another subject. They agree in their essential moral principles and religious teachings, and in the conditions of salvation for sinful men. And there followed naturally the truth that Christ sustains the moral law in his teachings, his life, his death, and in the provision for men to be saved through him. For "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

I have now mentioned all the subjects considered in the way of direct argument for the truth of Christianity in these successive chapters. There was, besides, one on the subject of inspiration; and also one in which some of the most common objections were noticed.

I propose now, at the risk of some repetition, to mention what seem to me the strongest points of argument for the Christian religion brought out in these discussions. All minds are not affected alike; and others may not think as I do in relation to the several subjects and their bearing on the great question, whether God has spoken to men.

To my own mind the topics which have been presented from time to time have all been exceedingly interesting. But one is before all the others both in interest and importance.

1. The story of Jesus Christ is the most strangely wonderful that has ever been told in this world. It surpasses all the fictions which the imagination of man has invented. Such goodness, such purity, such power, such truth, such knowledge, such discernment of men's hearts, such reproof of their sins, such compassion for their sorrows, such tenderness toward the penitent, such severity toward the wicked impenitent, such lofty claims, stopping nowhere beneath the throne of God, — for he claimed to be the Judge of the world, — such perfect independence of the common desires, pleasures, fears, and powers of men, and such self-sacrificing beneficence toward men, with such wisdom and simplicity and force and life in his words, mingled sometimes with strange authority and mystery, and then such miraculous works, such opposition to him of men in

power, and such cruel injustice and sufferings, and such a death, foretold and voluntary on his part, not for himself but for others, yet endured in agony and apparent despair, followed too by such a resurrection and manifestation to his friends, and by such an inspiration of those friends with new courage and hope and energy and power, with new thoughts, desires, labors, and influence among men, — all these things constitute a personal history and character unlike any other, above any other, standing altogether apart from any that has ever been known, from any that has ever been conceived among men. With the abundant proof that he was truly a man, I do not wonder that he is also called God. Regarding him as really man and really God, he brings together humanity and divinity. He joins our human nature with its dependence and wants, notwithstanding even its sinfulness and need of pardon and purifying, to the divine nature. He shows God's compassion toward men, and the true way of blessedness for men, in cleav-

ing to God with love and trust, with penitence and faithful service.

This wonderful character, the Christ of history, the Christ of truth and love, of peace and hope, who blesses the world with the clearest moral light that has shone upon it, who shows the principles of righteousness wherever he is known, and draws men with the cords of love wherever they believe in him, who gives rest to the troubled spirit and cheerful hope to the despairing sinner, — this Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, is the strongest argument for the truth and the divine authority of the Christian religion. Every one in a Christian land who rejects this argument shuts his eyes against the light which shines around him. Morally, Jesus Christ is the light of the world; and to turn away from him is to walk in darkness.

2. THE MIRACLES are a consenting and confirming part of the argument which we have in Christ for the truth of Christianity. To deny that they can be, or that they can be proved to men, according to the present fashion of scien-

tific skepticism, is equal to a denial that God exists, or, if he exists, that he can make himself known to men by a direct manifestation of his power and presence. Admitting that God exists and may be expected to make himself known to men, the miracles of the Bible are no more to be rejected than other extraordinary facts; and the testimony for them is no more to be regarded as incredible than the testimony for other wonderful events.

The miracles do not stand alone. They are associated with the teachings and the life of Christ. In the Old Testament they are in connection with the law which came by Moses and with the national institutions established by the same great lawgiver. And so they may be regarded as compacting and sealing the testimony which God gave to his law and to his Son Jesus Christ.

3. THE LAW itself is of such a character for excellence and authority that man could not have invented it. The miracles by which God empowered Moses to prove his commission may have more impressed the Jewish people.

Their convincing power to those who saw them could not be resisted. But to us, who only have the story of them, the ten commandments, the most perfect moral law known, — so perfect indeed that no man can find a fault in it, the standard of morals for the world, never to be outgrown nor set aside, — this law of God's perfect righteousness and truth and love comes with God's authority on its face and in its substance. It could not have been of man; it must have been of God.

4. The influence of the Christian religion is another obvious, palpable, and convincing argument for its truth. Its influence appears at once in its principles and precepts. Every one sees immediately that in receiving it he must become a good man. Or if any one is so self-blinded that he expects to be a Christian though he does not yield himself to the good influences of Christianity, he sees that every one else who becomes a follower of Christ must become an example of goodness.

And this evidence increases with every observation of the working of Christianity in

the world. We see individuals really and permanently changed for the better by becoming Christians. This is a fact of frequent occurrence. It is seen in every small community where Christian influences are well sustained. It is multiplied as the gospel reaches in its power the people of larger communities. The reforming power of God's truth grows with the progress of time. It goes on from age to age doing good in this wicked world. The Christian religion is a good influence of itself; and it is the seed of all the good influences which are elevating, reforming, and purifying men.

It quickens the mind, so that not unfrequently persons who become devoted Christians seem to grow in their intellectual power. It stimulates education, so that a Christian people are sure to be a well educated community. It is in Christian lands that nearly all the improvements in science and the arts are made. It is only in Christian lands that plans are devised and carried into effect for the education of the whole people. It is only in Christian lands that the perfect law of right-

eousness is held up as the practical rule of living. There indeed it is but partially and poorly done; yet a powerful influence is exerted to restrain men from wickedness and animate them to righteousness. Consequently, the standard of morals and the habits of life are most manifestly higher among men in proportion as the knowledge and belief of Christianity prevail. This those who are accustomed to its ordinary influence do not always see. But when a people are transformed, through the introduction of Christianity, from the lowest condition of heathenism to a civilized and Christian state, within a human lifetime, its salutary power, its divine goodness and divine energy, are made so plain that none but such as will not see can deny the proof.

Several of the modern missions bear this testimony to the divine origin and excellence of our religion. Such is the testimony of the Sandwich Island Mission, given so distinctly as to leave no room for a reasonable doubt. It has been extensively published. And though

it has been denied, the denial is so surely false and malicious that none have reason to be deceived. Other missionary successes would give the like testimony if they were as fully reported. In truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ has been proved, by actual experiment, to be the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to them that believe.

The apostle Peter, in writing to Christians, said, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." So may all Christian ministers say to those who have heard the gospel declared by them. When we preach Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, we declare the simple truth, which only unreasonable and wicked men will deny. We declare it boldly. So it ought to be proclaimed. God has set his seal upon it. To be timid and hesitating in our proclamation of it, as if there were some uncertainty about it, is to be unfaithful to him, and fail in the service to which he has called us.

But will men receive our message? They may not. Many do not. Some do. And they who do not must answer to God, and not to us. He is the Judge. He has endowed men with reason, that they may know the truth. If they do not know it when it is declared to them, they are unreasonable. They turn away from the light, or they shut their eyes against the light. Blinded by their perverse prejudices, their evil passions, and their deceitful lusts, they choose darkness rather than light.

Many, alas! do thus wander out of the ways of truth, and stumble in the paths of error, and fall into the snares of Satan, and perish in their own sins. For them there is no promise, no hope. It is only in coming to the light, in seeking for the word of God, and in obeying the truth through the Spirit, that we can have the hope of salvation.

Those words of plain truth and solemn warning which the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians (2 Cor. iv. 1–4) may now be adopted by all true ministers of the gospel: "There-

fore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

THE END.

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